

Price of a barrel of petroleum
US\$ 60.41
↑0.27

Valero Begins Shutting Main Processing Units at Aruba Refinery

by Bloomberg News

Valero Energy Corp., the largest U.S. refiner, said it has begun shutting the main processing units at its Aruba plant as part of a plan to stop production for at least two to three months because of low profit margins. Valero has shut one of two 38,000 barrel-a-day coking units and a 65,000 barrel-a-day hydrotreater, and more units will be shut down over the next several days, Bill Day, a Valero spokesman, said in an e-mail. The shutdown of the 275,000 barrel-a-day refinery, the third largest in the Caribbean, will be complete by the end of next week, he said.

Valero, which only acknowledges the closing and startup of main processing units, began the plant shutdown on July 6 and will be finished July 16, people familiar with the refinery's operations said on July 6.

Valero also has a refinery in St. Charles Parish.

The largest refineries in the Caribbean are the Hovensa refinery in the Virgin Island, followed by the Isla plant in the Netherlands Antilles owned by Petroleos de Venezuela SA.

Valero has tried to find a buyer for the refinery, the third largest among its 16 North American plants. In November 2007, the company said it hired UBS Investment Bank to help sell the facility.

The plant processes lower-cost, heavy sour crude oil, according to the company's Web site. The distillates, intermediate refinery feedstocks and blending components it produces, are sold in U.S., South American and European markets. □

Lotus Foundation presents "An Enchanted Evening"

Speaker Crystal Andrus brings new light to Aruba

Discover the Secrets to Creating and Sustaining Massive Success!



ORANJESTAD—Last evening at the Renaissance Convention Center, hundreds of locals participated in a very special seminar lead by the incredible Public Speaker Crystal Andrus. Crystal has spoken before in Aruba and by great applaud was welcomed back for a second appearance. The event last night was brought to Aruba by the inspiring Michelle Winklaar.

Dedicated to helping women world-wide feel beautiful, feminine, healthy, and empowered—in body, mind, & spirit, Crystal Andrus is a leader in the field of self-discovery and personal power. A former 200 lb stay-at-home mom turned best-selling author, radio host, integrative life coach, fitness specialist, holistic nutritionist, and single mother of two, Crystal has



weaved the tumultuous and triumphant stories of her own life into a courageous journey of healing, health and ultimate self-empowerment that has inspired thousands. Sharing the stage with motivational giants like Dr. Phil, Robin Sharma, Louise Hay, Debbie

Ford, Dr. Wayne Dyer, and Cheryl Richardson, Crystal's passionate and profound message continually takes her audiences on an emotional rollercoaster of a ride that leaves them ready to become the hero of their own lives! □

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



CHOCOLATE, CARAMEL AND COOKIE
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Customer service techniques prove an additional tool for Police Work

AHATA CEO meets with police officers



ORANJESTAD – Successful discussions on effective victim assistance strategies, which began during a regional conference, continue to take place today with follow-up classes in customer service provided through the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) to officers of the Aruba Police Corps. AHATA CEO & President Rob Smith Conference personally leads the class which will reach 120 officers over several months. “Customer service is a necessary tool in police work for any officer that deals with

the general public. For visitors, it is especially important. A vacation is a very emotional experience, which, when coupled with today’s economy, whereby just spending money is now an emotional decision, the affect of being a victim of even a petty crime while on holiday is three-fold,” explains Rob Smith.

In providing a new perspective that takes into consideration the victim as well as the island’s hospitality industry, the course takes a common sense approach to sometimes unusual circumstances. It



adapts hotel customer service training to specific situations in order to provide crime victims an active, timely and empathetic response. The reaction from officers who have already participated in the course has been positive, with the realization that simple steps in

providing understanding can work to assist the victim as much as good detective work. “Aruba’s police officers are highly trained in dealing with suspects and perpetrators of crimes. Customer service skills just add another tool to their arsenal in a comprehensive approach to their important

role in the community,” comments Rob Smith.

“Our association has enjoyed a good working relationship with the Police Department, and we are happy to continue to work together to assist each other with mutual goals that serve the betterment of everyone involved.” □





\$ 77 workshop fee p/p

Learn to Roll Sushi Tonight at Nobushi

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Always smiling, always happy

Francisca Suero celebrates 10 years with Café the Plaza



ORANJESTAD - Francisca Suero, who is always smiling, celebrated an early 10-year anniversary at Café the Plaza. The 64-year old lady was treated to a lovely bunch of

flowers, a dinner voucher from Aruba Wine and Dine and a cheque for her many years of loyalty. She also received a certificate, thanking her.

Francisca went to work as

a kitchen assistant and as a cleaning lady at Café the Plaza in the Renaissance Marketplace on June 25, 1999. □



Two times three generations in Tango Restaurant



ARAWAK GARDENS - On Friday the 30th of May, the Grossetti family joined their dinner in Tango Restaurant. This American / Italian family is visiting Aruba for about 10 years. The Grossetti's are living in New Jersey and

do think that Aruba is like paradise. This year the Grossetti's visited Aruba with generations strong. They will definitely come back another time to enjoy all the beautiful things which Aruba offers. □

Special Month of July!

<p>Appetizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish Soup • Onion Soup • Conch Fritters • Escargot • Salad 	<p>Entrée</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh Catch of the Day prepared by our local chef just the way you like it. • Jumbo Shrimp from our local waters, breaded served with potato or rice or with garlic tossed over linguine. • Filet Mignon 8 oz. US Tenderloin • Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast
<p>Dessert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate or Banana Cake • Ice Cream • Coffee / Tea 	<p>3-course dinner \$24 per person</p> <p><small>* This special cannot be used with any other promotions, vouchers or certificates.</small></p>

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The Palm Beach Plaza unveils its billboard



PALM BEACH – The Palm Beach Plaza currently in the last phase of construction recently unveiled its interim billboard, giving the much anticipated complex its official identity. The message on the billboard, says developer Ash Ramchandani, is a simple one. It is made up of two equally true statements focusing before all else on the

wondrous island we live on, and Aruba's #1 attraction, which is the beach. Nothing could be truer, Ash explains. Many thousands of visitors have said those same words as their planes turn to land at the Reina Beatrix airport. When visitors look out their windows, they can see crystal clear waters sprinkled by swimmers and boats. This is without

a doubt the purest visual statement about the island's number one attraction. "Aruba's number two attraction," Ash adds, "the Palm Beach Plaza, is opening soon, and that is the exact message the billboard conveys, in simple white



on black lettering." Something magical happened many millions of years ago, in the Caribbean when the island's beaches were formed and something equally fantastic is taking shape right before our eyes -- the final touch, the interior design phase of the southern Caribbean's largest shopping plaza.

"We look forward," Ash concludes, "to establishing a new benchmark for shopping, a fresh, higher bar for dining and entertainment. We will be there for our clients during the day as well as in the evenings. If the beaches are number one, then we are proud to be number two," he states. □

Cosy Dinner and Drinks @ Salt & Pepper



PALM BEACH - Salt & Pepper Tapasbar & Restaurant is the place to be for a relaxing after dinner drink. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights they have special prices for Heineken & Amstel Bright Beer, each for only \$ 3,- The kitchen stays open till 11.45 pm so you can combine your drink with a little snack at the bar. The experienced bartenders are always up for a chat and willing to make whatever you want and play whatever you like to here. The bar

stays open till at least 1 am. Can you take any longer? Challenge us! So are you looking for a nice place with a homey atmosphere? Leave the beach and cross the street! There you find Salt & Pepper right in front of Occidental Grand Hotel at Palm Beach. Salt & Pepper is located at Arawak Gardens, Palm Beach. In front of Occidental Grand. Opens at 8 am for breakfast, lunch and dinner □



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Monday \$10 buy-in \$1500 Guaranteed
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Wednesday \$10 Buy-in \$1,500 Guaranteed
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The drawings will take place each week at 8 PM according to the following schedule:

July 9th	Crystal	AWG 7500
July 16th	Seaport	AWG 7500
July 23th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
July 30th	Seaport	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
August 6th	Crystal	AWG 7500
August 13th	Seaport	AWG 7500
August 20th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
August 27th	Seaport	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
September 3rd	Crystal	AWG 7500
September 10th	Seaport	AWG 7500
September 17th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
September 24th	Seaport	AWG 7500 + weekend stay

For more information please call: 523-6318 of 523-6437
Winner must be present at the drawing with valid ID to claim their prize.



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Sundown Special, receive 10% off your meal when seated by 6 p.m.

*Kids Eat Free *Kids under age 12, one per paying adult

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Wednesday An island favorite - BBQ night

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Friday International Seafood Festival

Saturday Simply Perfect - Prime Rib

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Radisson
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Ricardo & Norma Albisu honored at Playa Linda Resort



PALM BEACH - Recently at Playa Linda Resort vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of goodwill title. The recent honoring was effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at Playa Linda Resort they call their home away from home. Ricardo & Norma Albisu were honored as a Ambassadors of Godwill after visiting Aruba for 20 years.

On picture Mr. Ricardo Croes together with Ricardo & Norma also Ivette from the Playa Linda Resort. □



Buccaneer Restaurant

Aruba's Legendary Buccaneer Restaurant, serving the freshest fish and seafood from the sea to your to your plate including steaks, duck, poultry and pasta dishes.

Whether you come with the whole family, bring a group of friends, or enjoy for a romantic dinner for two, Buccaneer has the high quality service and fresh, flavorful international dishes that will make your dining experience a memorable reservations email us at info@buccaneeraruba.com or call 586-6172

Monday - Saturday 5:30-10 pm



Ahoy Matey bring this ad in for a free glass of house wine



**"FAVI FUNDACION
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A new service introduced

Segafredo Café now offers lunch delivery

SOUTH BEACH CENTRE – Segafredo Café at the South Beach Centre just announced that it is offering free lunch delivery of sandwiches and drinks midday.

Just submit your order prior to 11 a.m., fax it or call in, and your baguette, croissant or ciabatta sandwiches will arrive at your doorstep escorted by a choice of salads, tosti, muffins, coffees to go and drinks to go. Segafredo Café at the South Beach Centre offers more than just delicious coffee. It serves dinner, drinks, frozen cocktails, beer, munchies, snacks, lunch and naturally, coffee anytime, and not just any old brew.

From the cultivation of the coffee plants and the selection of the berries in the Segafredo Zanetti plantations in Brazil and Costa Rica, to the art blending and roasting in the company's contemporary headquarters, the process guarantees high-quality results, producing the most famous and appreciated Italian coffee worldwide.

And the central location and friendly décor of the Segafredo Café in the South Beach Centre, makes it perfect as a place for friends!

The menu says manager Sartini Kousmaker offers Coffee, Hot and Iced Coffee Drinks, Coffee Specialties, Tea, Fruit Smoothies, Champagne Cocktails, Fine Wines by the Glass, Imported Beers, Premium Martinis, Tropical Cocktails & Frozen

Libations.

Patrons may order breakfast all day, from Croissant Sandwiches to Fresh Fruit Salads, Omelets, Brioches and Muffins to Classic Toasts, and Paninis.

For Lunch & Dinner Segafredo serves Italian Salads: Cesar, Caprese, Antipasto, Prosciutto Parma Mozzarella & Tomato, anytime of the day along with a great selection of hand-tossed

Pizza, and by-now-famous Lasagna.

After-dinner Tiramisu, Apple Pie, Chocolate Cake and Italian Ice-Cream, may be enjoyed late into the night.

Whether its healthy bar food that you're seeking or simply coffee, Segafredo is an outdoor Italian café where locals and visitors meet and mingle and Friday's HAPPY HOUR has become an institution, with a

perfect selection of house music and a full bar, to dine, drink and people-watch!

The Segafredo coffee bar at the airport's departure lounge also has a wide range of quality refreshments from the classic Italian espresso to desserts, gelato, and paninis, salads, appetizers, beer and wine. For more information: sartini.kousemaker@gmail.com



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PALM BEACH

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Segafredo now also offers lunch delivery services, call to ask for order list.

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Nos Cunucu...local cuisine with a different twist!



ORANJESTAD – Bringing the Aruban culinary heritage to a unique country side location at Tanki Leendert #145-K. A lifetime dream of three families who have more than 60 years of local and international hospitality and culinary experience. Nos Cunucu is one of a handful of authentic Creole Aruban cuisine restaurant on the island. So if you want to taste real Aruban food, this is the way to go!

the menu was creatively engineered as it represents our Aruba culture. Cunucu refers to the piece farming land in the backyard where for generations Aruban cultivated their own produce. The goods from the earth included corn, peppers, cucumbers, okra, peanuts, papaya, mango, shimaruco (wild cherry) and many more.

The name 'Nos Cunucu' was carefully chosen, and

With wooden tables and chairs, you can either sit inside or feel the tropical



breeze in the open air patio. The domino table is ready for a friendly game over some of the best Aruban music while you can get acquainted with some of the traditional everyday artifacts.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner from 12:00 noon straight until

10:00 pm. Although it is located outside of the high rise or downtown area, Nos Cunucu has very easy access. Between Ponton and Tanki Flip you take the road right in front of the well known Wema Hardware store.

For sure, the best way to know suburban Aruba.

The Chef uses a bountiful array of local ingredients found on land and in the Caribbean Sea, and creates a kaleidoscope of color, distinctive tastes and flavors. They serve a three

course Early Bird Sunset Dinner for di un fixed menu for only \$15 between 5:30 and 6:30 pm, which is the best value on the island. You will be surrounded by a very modest yet colorful atmosphere. The closest thing to sitting in a old common Aruban kitchen to eat.

The 'A La Carte' menu takes you on a culinary tour of the island with masterpieces never seen on any menu. For example Conch Sausage, Kala (fried batter of black eyed peas



infused with hot sauce), Suls (seared pickled pork meat), Fried Goat Cheese, Steak Crioyo, island's popular Goat Stew, Jambo (Okra), wild grown island cucumber, and the Award Winning Conch in Garlic Sauce, among others.

Portions are generous and next to the mandatory salt & peppers dispensers on your table, you will find also Aruba's own famous Madame Jeanette hot sauce next to the house seared onions sauce; both exquisite.

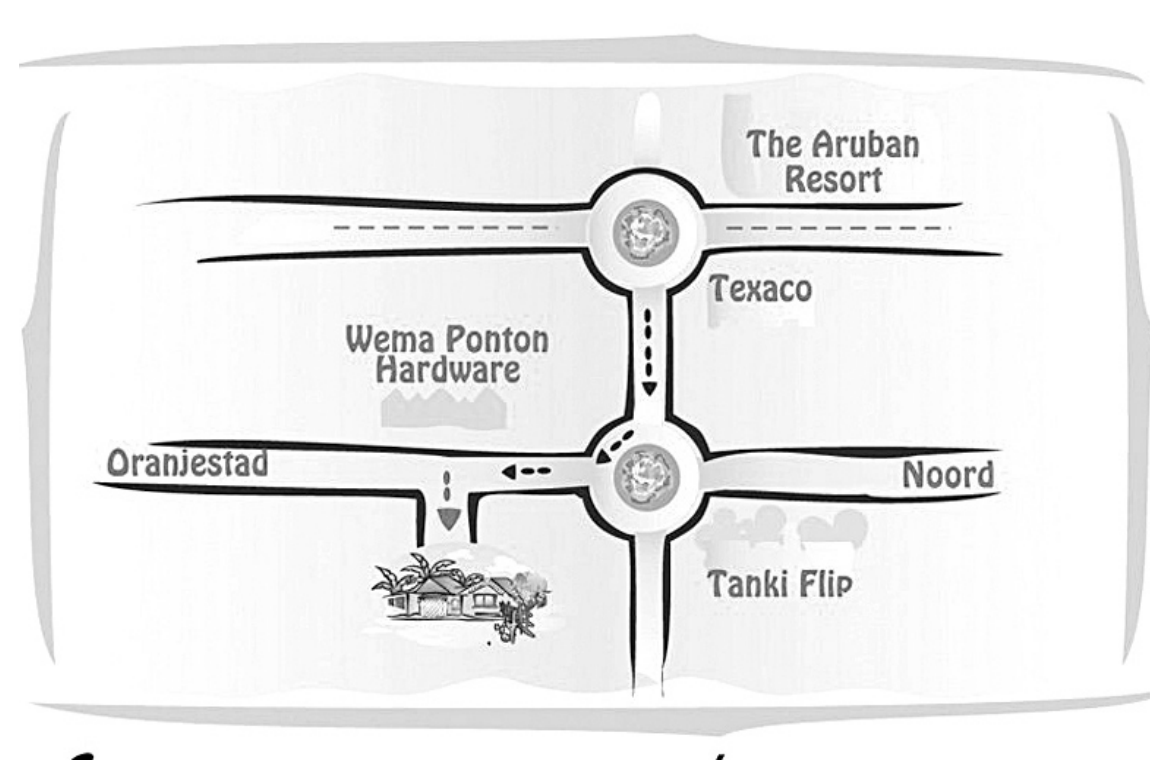
All plates are served with local favorite side dishes such as fried plantain, funchi (polenta) and pan bati (flap jacks made with ground sweet corn). To finalize your dining experience, a must try are the desserts such as Dushi di Papaya (Papaya compote),

Bolo di Mama (cake of the day made by Mama) and the island famous Quesillo (caramel flan).

The well stocked wine cellar and bar provides you with a selection of wines, champagne and spirits that will compliment your menu choice.

The Nos Cunucu bar is the home of 'The Nos Cunucu Punch.' Bar is open from 12:00 noon till 11:00 pm. Two for One Happy Hour including selected premium brands every day from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm serving complimentary local snacks. On Fridays Happy Hour is from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Under new management and completely renovated, the are ready to welcome you. Reservations are highly recommended for lunch and dinner. □



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On Eagle Beach

Roderick & Donna pledge eternal love



AMSTERDAM MANOR- On July 9, 2009 Roderick Nickole Nickerson and Donna Shemanne' Turner from Fort Worth Texas said "I Do" to one another at sunset.

Roderick and Donna met in 2001 at a restaurant called H&J; they were introduced by Donna's cousin Tamaris Cooper. The friendship grew stronger after 2 years which turned into a lasting love. Roderick proposed to Donna in May of 2008. They were at their home when he popped the question and Donna was surprised.

They decided on Aruba for the destination because they wanted to have a paradise wedding.

Their dream wedding finally became a reality as Roderick and Donna pledged eternal love beside Aruba's famous Divi Tree on Eagle Beach. Friends and family gathered together as Reverend Jacobs delivered the sermon.

Bella Aruba Photography was there to capture the moments as it unfolded as the sun set behind the horizon. The dinner reception took place at the romantic Passions Restaurant along Aruba's shoreline.

"Aruba was the perfect place



because we could bring our family and our closet friends. We knew that Aruba would be a place that we would never forget", replied Donna " We

want to thank Lissy Lampe of Ceremonies and Celebrations in Aruba for creating our perfect wedding in paradise☐



H1N1 spreading quickly in Aruba

ARUBA - - Aruba's Directorate Public Health announced Sunday that there were twelve new cases of the AH1N1 virus. Aruba now has 25 registered cases of infected persons.

Children under the age of 15 years are not allowed into hospitals for the time being, now that an employee of the children's ward has possibly contracted the "Mexican influenza," as well as three children of that section. Furthermore, the visitors' hours have been restricted. Moreover, it was announced that there was a case of another infection source. Of the twelve new cases, only one had had direct contact with the infected athletes during the recent volleyball tournament in Trinidad. Of the other eleven persons, it is unknown how the "swine flu" spread. The twelve infected people are isolated at home and have slight flu symptoms. According to epidemiologist Maribel

Tromp, all infected persons are residents of the island. The virus is currently spreading without

government even knowing where exactly it comes from. "The reason why it is spreading so rapidly is that it concerns a very mild form of influenza. People not even aware of having contracted the Mexican influenza are therefore spreading the virus at work or in other public areas," according to Tromp.

There are other flu viruses that show the same symptoms, such as the Rhinovirus as well as the usual flu.

Horacio Oduber Hospital announced that a worker of the children's section had possibly contracted the Mexican influenza, as well as three patients. The results will be announced later this week, according to spokesperson Bob Harms.

The employees are under treatment and have been

sent home, while the three young patients are being treated in the hospital. Children under the age of 15 years are not allowed to enter the hospital for the time being, in order to prevent further spreading.

The visitors' hours were also restricted and are now from twelve o'clock until one o'clock in the afternoon and from seven until eight o'clock in the evening.

The number of visitors is also restricted, so that only two people are allowed to visit a patient per visiting hour.

The hospital will strictly adhere to the measures, says Harms, although

exceptions are made for parents visiting their young children. They will receive a so-called continual visitor's pass from the hospital. The same applies for people whose family members are at death's doorstep.

Furthermore, the hospital has placed hand soap dispensers on all floors, as well as at the main entrances of the hospital. Persons showing flu symptoms such as high fever, dry cough and sore throat are requested not to visit the hospital, but first contact the Diagnostic Centre.

Harms explained that visitors for the radiology department should contact

the hospital first upon any signs of mentioned flu symptoms. Subsequently, the route to the hospital and the ward will be explained to them.

Seven cases of the Mexican influenza have been registered so far on Curaçao; nearly four times less than Aruba, even though the neighbouring island is twice as large and has double the population.

Harms: "This could be due to the fact that on Curaçao less people visit the doctor compared to Aruba. The threshold is somewhat lower on Aruba, as a doctor's visit is fully reimbursed by the medical insurer AZV." □

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Central Bank leans towards dollarisation

W I L L E M S T A D - - Dollarisation maybe the direction in which to head for the new Countries of St. Maarten and Curaçao – a choice already made for the soon-to-be Dutch public entities Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

Giving the 2008 financial report, Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles President Emsley Tromp said having the US dollar as legal tender removed the possibility of a balance of payments crisis with the risk of devaluation.

An economic downturn or reversal of capital flows wouldn't turn into a currency crisis, he added. However, economic adjustments will be necessary to improve the investment climate and hence regain the trust of foreign investors. In addition, the elimination of devaluation risk will promote trade and foreign investments, make foreign borrowing cheaper, and reduce international transaction cost.

The new countries Curaçao

and St. Maarten will form a monetary union with one central bank and a common currency. St. Maarten is already de facto dollarised and the US dollar is widely accepted in Curaçao. Therefore, it would not be such a big step to formally dollarise St. Maarten and Curaçao.

However, dollarisation has some drawbacks.

First, the authorities lose monetary policy as an instrument to steer the economy, limiting the available policy mix to correcting macroeconomic disequilibria.

Second, the "lender of last resort" function of the Central Bank disappears. Finally, under dollarisation, the Central Bank would lose its main sources of income: investment of the foreign exchange reserves and issuing banknotes.

Given the limited scope to pursue independent monetary policy under the current exchange rate regime, this loss would not be substantial, according

to the Central Bank. The recent adjustment periods have indicated that small open economies like ours are limited to fiscal policies and structural measures to remain competitive and hence improve their investment climates.

The lion's share of the Central Bank's profit consists of licence fees, which will continue to exist under the regime of dollarisation. With the balance of payments constraint no longer binding, the need to hold foreign exchange reserves to maintain the peg no longer applies. Therefore, the bank's capital reserves will all become investable funds, thereby preserving the profitability of the bank, Tromp pointed out.

"We need to accelerate the deposit insurance scheme. Aside from providing depositors with added security, the funds of such a scheme, some of which can come from the current reserve requirements, will meet the function of lender

of last resort. Moreover, the government would have to assume this function even under the current exchange rate regime.

This became abundantly clear during the recent financial crisis," he explained.

Dollarisation would result in no perceptible changes in the profit of the Central Bank and hence no impact on the government budget. Rather, it might lead to an increase in the bank's profit, as the balance of payments constraint always has confined the bank to pursue a policy of profit maximisation. The bank also has non-interest sources of income in terms of the fees it charges the financial institutions to cover the cost of financial sector supervision.

A careful assessment towards a more realistic balance between the advantages and disadvantages of dollarisation for Curaçao in particular should be part of the public debate in choosing the most suitable monetary system for the future countries in the Kingdom, the bank president suggested. The balance seems to point in the direction of dollarisation, given the vulnerabilities in the present world economic order.

As for financial sector

vulnerability in the new constitutional structure of the Kingdom, the bank envisions a financial supervision structure in which every country will have its own supervisory institution, complemented by a standard-setting body on the Kingdom level.

This body will consist of the presidents of the respective central banks and be charged with the preparation of legislation in line with international best practices, the timely implementation of rules and regulations, and monitoring compliance.

Such a structure not only will guarantee compliance with international supervisory standards and create a level playing field with uniform rules within the Kingdom, but also will promote transparency and credibility.

For setting up this structure, the current cooperative arrangements between the central banks of the Netherlands, Aruba, and the Netherlands Antilles can serve as a basis. This approach will ensure a solid supervisory architecture, sound financial institutions, and financial stability in the new countries of the Kingdom, thereby removing a major potentially destabilising force on our financial sector. □



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Central Bank says GDP growth dropped due to economic crisis

WILLEMSTAD--The strong increase in commodity and food prices, the international financial crisis and its spill-over effects resulted in a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 2.0 per cent last year, compared to 3.8 per cent in 2007, the Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles reported this week.

The inflation rate soared to 6.3 per cent, up from 2.8 per cent in 2007. External factors were mainly responsible for this acceleration, including the sharp increases in commodity (including oil) and food prices. A 15 per cent increase in the minimum wage to compensate the lower incomes for the loss of purchasing power was the main internal contributor to the higher inflation.

Private demand slowed, which was particularly noticeable in consumption as the rapidly increasing inflation eroded consumers' purchasing power, and personal credit extension declined.

Private investments weakened only slightly, supported by the ongoing tourism-related projects. Public demand decreased, reflected in both consumption and investment. Net foreign demand still noted a decline, but less pronounced than in 2007 because of a significant gain in exports of goods and services.

Despite the slowdown in economic growth, the labour market continued to improve, reflected by a drop in the unemployment rate from 11.5 per cent in 2007 to 9.7 per cent in 2008. All islands contributed to the improved employment situation, marred only by a slight deterioration in youth unemployment in Curaçao.

An analysis by sector shows a slowdown in activities in all sectors except the hotels and restaurants, real estate, renting, and business services sectors. Buoyant stay-over tourism and significant real estate purchases, particularly by non-residents, contributed to this positive exception.

Curaçao was the main contributor to the expansion in the number of stay-over visitors, which benefited especially from the dollar

tourism phenomenon from Venezuela. St. Maarten and Bonaire recorded only marginal growth in stay-over tourism. Cruise tourism recorded only a moderate increase, led by rapid growth in Bonaire. Curaçao also contributed positively, but St. Maarten registered a decline.

The construction sector continued to post the highest growth rate, resulting from ongoing tourism-related and real estate projects. The transport, storage and communication sector also continued to perform well.

The growth in stay-over tourism contributed to more passengers handled at the airports. In addition, oil storage and transshipment activities increased. Harbour activities were mixed, with further growth in the amount of cargo handled, but a slight decline in the number of ship calls, due entirely to a drop in St. Maarten.

The financial sector almost maintained its growth rate, owing to the good performance of the domestic banking sector. A strong increase in income from fees and commissions, an improved interest margin, and extraordinary income boosted profitability. The growth in credit extension remained strong, while nonperforming loans were kept under control.

The cash balance of the Central Government deteriorated slightly in 2008 compared to 2007, reaching a deficit equivalent to 2.4 per cent of GDP. Initially, a small surplus was projected based on the interest savings related to the anticipated debt relief by the Dutch government, Bank President Emsley Tromp said. Because the entities had not yet complied with the conditions for the debt relief, this relief was postponed, resulting in the continuation of high deficits. The deterioration of the cash deficit was attributable to a slightly higher increase in expenditures than in revenues.

The Central Bank was successful in controlling private credit growth during 2008, hence preserving its reserves target by the auctioning of

certificates of deposit among the banks to mop up excess liquidity in the domestic money market. Therefore, the reserve requirement was not actively deployed, leaving the percentage unchanged at 13.25 per cent.

The bank's official lending rate was reduced in seven steps by 400 basis points to 1.00 per cent as of December 29, 2008, in line with the Fed-induced rapid decline in US interest rates and its impact on the domestic money and capital market.

Amidst this dire world economic climate, the economy of the Netherlands Antilles has been affected only moderately so far.

"We have weathered this storm largely because of the structural measures taken during the adjustment period and because of the debt relief programme, which has had a significant positive effect on our investment climate. The impact has been felt most in the international financial services sector, as its activities depend heavily on the international financial and business climate," Tromp said.

However, some developments can be identified that may mitigate the evident decline in economic growth.

On the international level, indications are that the trough of the recession is behind us. Commodity prices are starting to strengthen again, several rescued financial institutions have begun to report profits, and sentiment in securities markets is becoming more

optimistic.

On the domestic level, inflation is declining, improving consumers' purchasing power. Furthermore, the level of investments is likely to be maintained, owing to various ongoing hotel and residential projects and an increasing number of projects scheduled under the Social Economic Initiative.

Moreover, the prospect of a balanced government budget as a result of the debt relief will facilitate the implementation of policies directed at mitigating the impact of the weakening economy. Therefore, a growth in real GDP of approximately one per cent in 2009 is still projected.

In the area of the public finances, the debt relief started when the entities complied with all conditions: in January 2009 for the Central Government and in April 2009 for the Island Government of Curaçao. The Dutch government will pay all maturing principal and 70 per cent of interest cost until approximately 70 per cent of the outstanding debt at the end of 2005 is redeemed. In addition, NAf. 500 million in arrears will be settled.

Approximately NAf. 700 million in debt securities will mature in 2009. If, in addition, it is assumed that all arrears will be settled, then the debt ratio could decline from 82 per cent to 63 per cent during 2009. The governments will save NAf. 226 million in interest payments, resulting in nearly balanced budgets in 2009.

Owing to the debt relief

and the introduction of a set of budgetary rules and supervision, lasting sound public finances finally has become a reality.

The debt relief also will pose challenges for the Central Bank's monetary policy. The payment by the Netherlands of principal, interest, and arrears will increase liquidity substantially in the domestic economy.

This increase in liquidity comes on top of the current high liquidity in the banking system, partly because domestic investors keep more funds locally related to the low returns and turbulent securities markets abroad. The abundance of liquidity has further decreased domestic interest rates.

On the one hand, low interest rates are favourable for mitigating the weakening of the economy and a quick recovery once the world economy improves. On the other hand, the local financial institutions have to deal with lower interest income, which can be compensated by reducing deposit rates, tapping other sources of income, and improving cost-efficiency.

To facilitate these changes and in light of the increasing globalisation, the Central Bank advocates a further consolidation of the financial sector. Specifically for institutional investors, the Bank has eased the investment rule as of January 1, 2009, allowing them more flexibility to invest abroad the funds received from the debt relief □



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- *Receives Standing Ovation For Keynote Remarks To Graduating Class At UCE* -

CHTA President Enrique de Marchena Kaluche urges new initiatives to combat Global Economic



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – Enrique De Marchena Kaluche, president of the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, is urging the Caribbean to “strengthen international advertising and programs” to counter the effects of the tourism reductions seen across most of the region. He made these remarks during a keynote address to the graduating class of the School of Hotel Management and Tourism at the San Pedro de Macoris-based Eastern Central University (UCE) in the Dominican Republic.

De Marchena Kaluche, a key figure within the Dominican tourism and real estate industries in addition to his role at CHTA president, offered insight into current tourism industry developments and an overview on what is being done by various governmental bodies and private-sector organizations within the Caribbean region to combat the negative effects of the global economic crisis.

“There is no doubt that, as far as numbers of tourists and the spending power of American visitors are concerned, the American market is the main source of tourism for the Caribbean,” said De Marchena Kaluche during his third appearance at the university.

“Dominican Republic, Cuba and the Mexican Caribbean, to a great extent – and Jamaica, to a lesser extent – are exceptions to this. However, the rest of the Caribbean depends heavily on the American market,” De Marchena Kaluche noted.

“The reduced spending power of the American family and the uncertainty weighing on the minds of everyone has led to a reduction in potential arrivals to the region,” said De Marchena Kaluche, suggesting that the Caribbean “strengthen international advertising and programs to attract investments by latching onto innovative and creative ideas” to counter the

effects of the tourism reductions seen across most of the region.

Citing tourism increases in Cuba and Jamaica as the rare exception, De Marchena Kaluche explained that the “reality for the rest of the Caribbean is more like the Bahamas rather than Cuba. In other words, islands such as St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Bermuda, Barbados, Grenada and others, suffered a 10% or more decrease in the influx of tourists.”

The following is an excerpt from De Marchena Kaluche’s remarks, detailing the steps various Caribbean nations have taken to help reduce the impact of the decline in tourism and programs some have initiated to stimulate bookings and increase their competitiveness within the global industry: “The Antiguan government was one of the first Caribbean countries to react to the economic crisis. Last October they got an emergency economic plan off the ground. This plan set out certain benefits or concessions for hotels, such as a 15% reduction on electricity bills and duty free purchase of diesel, as well as other minor measures. “The Bahamas took the following measures to counteract the economic crisis: exemption from import tax on a limited number of products for hotels, such as glassware, dishware, silver, marine parts; elimination of Customs/Immigration surcharges to air lines; support infrastructure in the ports to attract cruise lines; road construction; US\$ 400 million invested in new airport terminals and facilities; hosting Miss Universe 2009 at a cost of US\$ 6 million shared between the public and private sector; a help program for workers granting unemployment insurance; funds assigned to aid workers let go from hotels; and a program to enhance tourist attractions.”

In regards to the Bahamas, De Marchena Kaluche noted that “500 workers let go from the hotel sector [have been] contracted by the government to improve the appearance of the entire island.”

“In Barbados, the government made an extra US\$10 million available for tourism marketing, half of which was spent in the last quarter of 2008 and the rest is currently being invested,” said De Marchena Kaluche.

“The [Barbados] government also set up what it calls ‘The Tourist

Industry Aid Fund.’ This fund was created for all businesses involved in tourism – not just hotels, but restaurants, tourist attractions, activities, vehicle rental and other small tourist businesses. The fund was set up with an initial input of US\$ 7.5 million, which was distributed in the first quarter of this year.

“The second phase will see the investment of a further US\$5 million to be handed over at the end of August 2009...however, for this second distribution the employment factor will be in play. Companies that have let go a high percentage of their employees will not be eligible for aid unless they can prove certain conditions or circumstances.

“The government has also financed other marketing initiatives with the airlines and JetBlue will be introduced in October, offering daily flights [to Barbados] from New York,” he added.

In Bermuda, De Marchena Kaluche noted “special concessions to hotels in relation to tax on salaries. Likewise, negotiations were allowed with the trade union regarding the freezing of annual salary increases, customs incentives were broadened as a relief initiative for hotels and [Bermuda’s] advertising budget was increased to US\$ 2 million.

“The Federal Government of Mexico began an ambitious campaign called ‘Viva Mexico’ which focuses on increasing tourism. The Island of Cozumel was included in this campaign, and a new brand of advertising for Cozumel is also to be launched. “Likewise the [Cozumel] hotel industry has contributed US\$1 million towards promoting Cozumel in the American, Canadian and Mexican markets,” noted De Marchena Kaluche.

“Finally, due to the lack of tourists in the main tourist resorts, the State and Federal governments [of Mexico] have set up a special program to help employees by granting two months of financial aid,” he added.

“An agreement was drawn up between the Grenadian government and the Hotel and Tourism Association of Grenada [to] protect existing jobs in the tourism industry – particularly in the hotels and guest houses – keep the hotels and guest houses functioning throughout the economic crisis and protect the

direct air services negotiated by the Air Transport Commission.

“A Social Protocol is also being negotiated,” said De Marchena Kaluche, advising that “provisions will be added to the Social Protocol guaranteeing help for the tourism industry.

“In Guadalupe, an extra US\$3 million has been injected for the marketing and advertising of the island as a tourist destination,” he noted.

“In Puerto Rico, the government has...invested US\$12 million in an advertising campaign for the island which began at the end of 2008.

An extra US\$5 million was added in March-April 2009 to reinforce the campaign [and] special concessions for travel agents working with the ‘Dining out in Puerto Rico’ program have been made,” said De Marchena Kaluche, further noting that the island is “currently studying various options to offer social and employment aid.

“In St. Lucia, US\$5 million [was] invested by the government in an overseas advertising campaign, [while] St. Martin has reduced room tax from 5% to 4%,” said De Marchena Kaluche, pointing out that St. Kitts and Nevis now offers “exemptions on wines and food for small hotels with under 100 rooms [with the] same deal for restaurants.”

He also touted “tax amnesty for arrears” in St. Kitts and Nevis with “no penalties.”

De Marchena Kaluche applauded St. Vincent and the Grenadines for allowing “electricity consumption for hotels at the same price as domestic users, reduced income tax from 30% to 20% for hotels [and] 20% income tax for yacht operators.

“The U.S. Virgin Islands [launched an] emergency marketing plan with US\$1.4 million capital, US\$185,000 of which was contributed by the private sector.”

Speaking of his native Dominican Republic, De Marchena Kaluche advised of strategies announced by Secretary for Tourism, Francisco Javier García, including plans to “double the investment in advertising, promotion and public relations, [open] new offices in Europe, the U.S. and Latin America, work with emerging markets and promote a regional communications program in the

Caribbean.”

He also spoke of greater efforts to facilitate investments, including “the elimination of bureaucratic hindrances to speed up the processing of new projects,” specifically noting the creation of “a new unit for processing new projects combining elements from the Dept.

for Tourism and the Dept. for the Environment.” De Marchena Kaluche discussed new methods the Dominican Republic is introducing in regards to working with tour operators, including “signing two-year contracts [for increased] stability and offering a bonus for increasing passenger numbers.”

He further advised of investments for infrastructure improvements, such as the improvement of roads in major tourist hubs by July 3, 2009 and efforts to “fight poverty in Punta Cana [with] a program to build housing utilizing private companies in exchange for lands with great tourism potential.” He also spoke of heightening local awareness with “a communications program to increase local self esteem and appreciation for tourism.”

Coordination with the Private Sector was a major theme in his remarks on the Dominican Republic.

“From our point of view these are important measures that have been announced. However, rather than being a plan to counteract the crisis, most of these measures are steps and policies that should have been put into practice three or four years ago and, in truth, constitute a long overdue overhaul,” said De Marchena Kaluche, still speaking about the Dominican Republic.

“For example, the fact that the previous tourism authorities created a type of project dam obstructing the influx of millions of dollars in local and foreign investments into the system for months and causing incalculable damage to the development of the country and tourist industry, and that these same projects are now facing grave financing difficulties because of the global banking problems and resulting credit restrictions, is inexcusable. “It is also wise to call attention to the growing tendency for state bodies to create administration taxes or increase taxes charged to hotels exorbitantly, said De Marchena Kaluche. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY



Wall Street ekes out gain on banks, materials

By Edward Krudy

NEW YORK (Reuters) – Stocks edged higher on Thursday as investors bought beaten-down technology and commodity shares, while a positive broker comment on Goldman Sachs boosted the financial sector.

Trading was choppy in light volumes for most of the day as investors remained cautious ahead of more corporate earnings reports in the coming weeks. Alcoa Inc (AA.N) set a positive tone when it kicked off the earnings season with a smaller-than-expected loss after the bell on Wednesday.

The Dow industrials closed just above break-even as shares of healthcare and consumer staples companies weighed. Merck & Co Inc (MRK.N) fell 3.7 percent to \$27.01 on speculation its Zetia cholesterol drug fared poorly in a clinical trial comparing it to a drug from Abbott Laboratories (ABT.N). Merck was the biggest weight on the Dow.

Sentiment remained cautious ahead of the release of more U.S. corporate earnings, said Kurt Brunner, portfolio manager at Swarthmore Group in Philadelphia.

“Investors are still in more of a wait-and-see mode,” he said. “I still think we’re in this grinding phase, this choppiness, because I don’t know that we’re going to get a whole lot out of earnings.”

The Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) gained 4.76 points, or 0.06 percent, to 8,183.17. The Standard & Poor’s 500 Index (.SPX) added 3.12 points, or 0.35 percent, to 882.68. The Nasdaq Composite Index (.IXIC) rose 5.38 points, or 0.31 percent, to 1,752.55.

A treasury bond auction of 30-year debt showed signs of strength, providing some cheer for investors concerned about the growing mountain of U.S. government debt. Shares rose to session highs not long after the auction.

“A lot of people went short in anticipation of a poor auction and then had to cover when the auction actually went better than everyone thought,” said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Bank in Chicago. He referred to the strategy of short-selling, which involves selling borrowed shares in the hopes of buying them back when prices fall.

Goldman (GS.N) rose 3.4 percent to \$143.21 after Banc of America Securities-Merrill Lynch upgraded its rating to “buy” and raised its earnings estimates, saying the firm’s earnings power and book value were increasing rapidly again. The S&P financial sector (.GSPF) led the S&P 500 with a gain of 1.4 percent. □

New General Motors about to roll off assembly line

By TOM KRISHER and EMILY FREDRIX,
AP Business Writers

DETROIT – The new General Motors is about to roll off the assembly line as a leaner, greener model, maybe even a profitable one, too. Once the world’s largest and most powerful automaker, the troubled company was expected to emerge from bankruptcy protection by early Friday cleansed of massive debt and burdensome contracts that would have sunk it without federal loans.

The new company, 61 percent owned by the U.S. government, will clear bankruptcy in record time to face a brutally competitive global automotive market in the middle of the worst sales slump in a quarter-century.

Yet despite massive cost reductions, experts say GM must produce vehicles that people want to buy, and change its image from a lumbering bureaucracy that makes gas guzzlers to one on the cutting edge of efficiency and quality. “It is the smaller, leaner, tougher, better cost-focused GM,” said George Magliano, an automotive analyst with the consulting firm IHS Global Insight. “But they still have to deal with the problems that they faced longer-term.”

Rep. Gary Peters, whose Michigan district is home to three GM factories, said the company’s emergence signals a new era for the domestic auto industry and the thousands of people it employs.

“With bankruptcy in the rearview mirror, U.S. auto companies will even more aggressively pursue new technologies, become more globally competitive,” he said. “Decades from now, our nation will be glad we did not let a global credit crisis put an end to the American automobile.”



FILE - In this June 1, 2009 file photo, signs hanging inside the General Motors, Global Headquarters in Detroit, Mich., are shown. The path is now clear for General Motors to leave bankruptcy protection in record time as a leaner company that is better equipped to compete in a brutal global auto market.

(AP Photo/The Canadian Press, Dave Chidley, File)

On Thursday, a bankruptcy court order allowing GM to sell most of its assets to a new company went into effect.

Under plans that CEO Fritz Henderson will announce Friday, GM will cut another 4,000 white-collar jobs, including 450 top executives. The company still employs 88,000 people in the U.S. and 235,000 worldwide.

Henderson also is expected to describe how GM will streamline its bureaucratic management structure to become profitable again. GM has said it will be able to make money even if the U.S. auto market stays at a depressed level of 10 million to 10.5 million vehicles sold.

For the first half of this year, sales have remained just under 10 million, after hitting more than 16 million as recently as 2007. Analysts expect a slight recovery in the second half.

“I’m very much looking forward to a point where we’re operating in clear air, and the name of the company not being associated with bankruptcy and loans and these things,” said Mark LaNeve, GM’s

North American marketing chief.

GM ranked as the top global automaker in terms of sales for 77 years before Japan’s Toyota Motor Corp. snatched its crown in 2008. The company sold nearly 8.4 million cars and trucks around the world in 2008, falling short of Toyota’s nearly 9 million.

Once the largest corporation in America, GM held the top spot in the Fortune 500 ranking for 20 years before being pushed out of the top spot in 1973 by Exxon Mobil Corp. It reclaimed No. 1 status in 1985 and held it for another 15 years.

Experts say GM’s future success will depend largely on its ability to persuade consumers that it’s a different company, one that builds cars that will equal or outlast Japanese models. To illustrate the change, GM is considering a new name.

Turning a profit will not be easy. GM lost more than \$80 billion in the last four years and survives only because it expects to receive \$50 billion in U.S. government loans. □



will.i.am (L) and Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas perform during the Montreux Jazz Festival July 6, 2009. REUTERS/Denis Balibouse

Black Eyed Peas claim top 2 singles in U.S

NEW YORK (Billboard) – The Black Eyed Peas held on to the top two spots on the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart for a second week on Thursday.

“I Gotta Feeling” led the field, while “Boom Boom Pow” followed at No. 2. The latter track ruled the Hot 100 for 12 weeks until “I Gotta Feeling” replaced it last week. Both come from the hip-hop act’s album “The E.N.D.,” which fell to No. 5 on the Billboard 200 Wednesday after three weeks at No. 1. Elsewhere on the Hot 100, Drake’s “Best I Ever Had” stayed at No. 3, Keri Hilson’s “Knock You Down,” featuring Kanye West and Ne-Yo, at No. 4, and Lady GaGa’s “LoveGame” at No. 5. Sean Kingston’s “Fire Burning” rose one to No. 6, and Jeremih’s “Birthday Sex” was also up one, to No. 7. Pitbull’s “I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)” fell two to No. 8, and Taylor Swift’s “You Belong With Me” rose two to No. 9. Linkin Park’s “New Divide” slipped one to No. 10.

“Bubbly” singer Colbie Caillat claimed the top debut at No. 12 with “Falling For You,” the first song from her forthcoming album “Breakthrough,” due August 25.

“That’s Not My Name” by the Ting Tings re-entered the Hot 100 at a new high of No. 45, bolstered by increased radio airplay and digital downloads.

On Billboard’s Hot Digital Songs chart, Michael Jackson held down five of the top 10 slots, led by “Man in the Mirror” at No. 2. The Peas’ “I Gotta Feeling” was No. 1. □

Billy Mays remains a TV pitchman, even in death

By **FRAZIER MOORE**,
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK – Death won’t still the voice of Billy Mays or his mighty powers of persuasion. Viewers will continue to find the boisterous, bearded TV pitchman hawking household products for the indefinite future. And at least one of his commercials is being introduced posthumously.

“Just stretch, wrap and it fuses fast,” says Mays, demonstrating a product called Mighty Tape on a kitchen drain pipe in the new commercial. Moments later, he’s seen, still wearing his signature sport shirt and



khaki slacks but accessorized with scuba gear, as he repairs a hole in another diver’s air hose underwater using Mighty Tape. The commercial will begin airing July 20. Mays’ advertising for other products in the Mighty brand line returned to the air earlier this week. □

Lawyers spar in Paris Hilton film contract dispute



FILE - In this July 3, 2009 file photo, Paris Hilton speaks during a news conference in Broumana, east of Beirut, Lebanon.

(AP Photo/Grace Kassab, file)

By **CURT ANDERSON**,
AP Legal Affairs Writer
MIAMI – Paris Hilton hated her 2006 movie “Pledge This!” and refused for months to make promotional appearances for it despite a contract requiring her to do so, lawyers for the film’s investors said as trial opened Thursday in an \$8 million lawsuit against her.

“During the six-month period, at no time would she take 10 minutes to do a phone interview,” attorney Bryan West, who represents the investors, said in opening statements. With Hilton nodding vigorously from her defense table seat, her attorney Michael Weinstein insisted she did numerous appearances for the movie but was unavailable to meet many requests by the film’s producers because of her extremely busy schedule. Hilton also had the right to refuse some promotion events that might harm her “brand” and never agreed to plug the DVD release of the movie from December 2006 through May 2007, he said.

“Paris Hilton is a promotion machine,” Weinstein said. “For 2 1/2 years, she relentlessly promoted that movie.” Hilton, a 28-year-old heiress, actress and model, is expected to testify Friday. She traveled to Miami for the trial from Dubai, where she has been filming episodes of her “My New BFF” reality show.

Wearing a sleeveless black-and-white dress with a large bow on the back, Hilton sat quietly at the defense table during opening statements, occasionally taking notes or fiddling with her twin ponytails. The lawsuit is being heard

by Chief U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno, who has a well known sense of humor. Moreno at one point asked West whether the contract allowed Hilton to refuse even the most outrageous promotion requests. □

Michael Jackson’s Escape Route Found!



Breanne L. Heldman and Ken Baker

Los Angeles (E! Online) – Michael Jackson’s departure from the Staples Center Tuesday didn’t require the involved level of hocus-pocus that’s been speculated.

E! News has learned exclusively how the star’s body disappeared from the giant venue undetected by the media...and all it took was an underground tunnel!

A source tells E! News that after the service, security moved the golden casket through an underground tunnel that connects the Staples Center to the Nokia Theatre. The tunnel—typically used by maintenance and food service workers and occasionally talent—runs beneath Chick Hearn Court, where hundreds of media were encamped following the ceremony.

La Toya, Rebbie and Janet Jackson used the secret passageway when they went across the street to thank the fans at the Nokia Theatre.

M.J.’s body was loaded into a van at an L.A. Live loading dock and was transported to refrigerated mortuary storage at an undisclosed location.

Neither Jackson’s rep nor AEG’s has commented.

The tunnel itself earned a mention in Variety just before the venue opened in 2007.

“There is a tunnel between Staples Center and the Nokia that creates the opportunity for an artist to sing the national anthem before a sporting event and then walk across the way backstage. Plans also call for a tunnel from the hotels to the backstage area, allowing a performer to commute to a show on foot.”

Unfortunately, the bigger mystery of where the King of Pop’s remains currently reside is still just that—a mystery. □



In this photo taken by an individual not employed by the Associated Press and obtained by the AP outside Iran shows Iranian protestors run away from tear gas fired by security in an opposition rally in Tehran, Iran, Thursday, July 9, 2009. Hundreds of young men and women chanted "death to the dictator," confronting police wielding batons and firing tear gas in the capital Thursday as opposition activists sought to revive street protests despite authorities' vows to "smash" any new marches.

Associated Press

Thousands protest in Iran, defying crackdown

NASSER KARIMI

Associated Press Writer

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Thousands of protesters streamed down avenues of the capital Thursday, chanting "death to the dictator" and defying security forces who fired tear gas and charged with batons, witnesses said.

Turning garbage bins into burning barricades and darting through choking clouds of tear gas, the opposition made its first foray into the streets in nearly two weeks in an attempt to revive mass demonstrations that were crushed in Iran's postelection turmoil.

Iranian authorities had promised tough action to prevent the marches, which supporters of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi have been planning for days through the Internet. Heavy police forces deployed at key points in the city ahead of the marches, and Tehran's governor vowed to "smash" anyone who heeded the demonstration calls.

In some places, police struck hard. Security forces chased after protesters, beating them with clubs on Valiasr Street, Tehran's biggest north-south avenue, witnesses said.

Women in headscarves and young men dashed away, rubbing their eyes in pain as police fired tear gas, in footage aired on state-run Press TV. In a photo from Thursday's events in Tehran obtained by The Associated Press outside Iran,

a woman with her black headscarf looped over her face thrust her fist into the air in front of a garbage bin that had been set on fire.

In another image, a man dropped to his knees, overcome by the effects of tear gas.

But the clampdown was not total. At Tehran University, a line of police blocked a crowd from reaching the gates of the campus, but then did not move to disperse them as the protesters chanted "Mir Hossein" and "death to the dictator" and waved their hands in the air, witnesses said. The crowd grew to nearly 1,000 people, the witnesses said.

"Police, protect us," some of the demonstrators chanted, asking the forces not to move against them.

The protesters appeared to reach several thousand, but their full numbers were difficult to determine, since marches took place in several parts of the city at once and mingled with passers-by. There was no immediate word on arrests or injuries. It did not compare to the hundreds of thousands who joined the marches that erupted after the June 12 presidential election, protesting what the opposition said were fraudulent results. But it was a show of determination despite a crackdown that has cowed protesters, who have not held a significant rally for the past 11 days.

Continued on Page B7

Four cemetery workers accused in grisly plot



Family members arrive to search for the graves of relatives at Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, Ill., Thursday, July 9, 2009, after graves were discovered dug up Wednesday and bodies dumped into unmarked mass graves in an alleged scheme to resell the plots to unsuspecting members of the public. Three men and a woman are facing felony charges after police found what they called "startling and revolting" conditions at the historic cemetery in the south Chicago suburb.

Associated Press

SOPHIA TAREEN

Associated Press Writer

ALSIP, Illinois (AP) — Prosecutors on Thursday charged three gravediggers and a manager in an elaborate scheme in which hundreds of corpses were dug up at a historic black cemetery near Chicago and strewn in a weeded area or reburied with other bodies so that plots could be resold, authorities said.

Continued on Page B5



Iraqi security forces secure the site of a bomb concealed in a bicycle parked at a market in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, July 9, 2009.

Associated Press

Worst violence since U.S. pullback hits Iraq

CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bombs killed nearly 60 people in Iraq on Thursday in the worst violence since U.S. combat troops withdrew from urban areas last week, and American forces released five Iranian officials suspected of aiding Shiite insurgents.

Continued on Page B8

Experts work to untangle U.S., S.Korea cyber attacks



An unidentified police officer of the Cyber Terror Response Center under the National Police Agency comes out from his office at the agency's headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, July 9, 2009. North Korea, which has been firing missiles and spewing threats against the United States, has been identified by South Korea's main spy agency as a suspect in the cyber attacks targeting government and other Web sites in the U.S. and South Korea.

Associated Press

**JORDAN ROBERTSON
LOLITA C. BALDOR**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. authorities trying to unravel widespread cyber attacks this week against government Web sites in the United States and South Korea are facing a lengthy, complex investigation that may never identify a

culprit, at least not one they would be willing to reveal. Cyber experts familiar with the investigation are divided over the extent of North Korean involvement, split between those who believe hackers may have simply used zombie computers in the region and those who think the communist nation has moved

to the digital battlefield.

Active involvement by North Korea would signal a new advancement by the nuclear-ambitioned nation.

If Pyongyang is behind the attacks, "it probably establishes a new pattern of behavior," said Rod Beckstrom, former head of the U.S. cybersecurity center. "If this is them, they are now in the club. And they're probably only going to get better."

Effects of the outage lingered Thursday as State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said cyber attacks on the department's computers continued, though not at the high volume seen in the first wave of the assault. A new wave of computer attacks also battered government sites in South Korea but did not knock them offline.

"We are taking measures to deal with this and any potential new attacks," Kelly said.

Investigators in both the United States and South Korea face a difficult task in trying to trace the attack to its source. The assault involved

more than 100,000 zombie computers linked in a network known as a "botnet." Most of those computers were in South Korea, but others were in Japan, China, the United States and possibly other countries.

Analysts and former government officials said Thursday the effort to find the culprit in the wave of Web attacks would be a multi-pronged federal investigation that includes agents lurking in nefarious cyber chat rooms seeking tips on the attackers, and analysts poring over the computer code looking for digital fingerprints. They say there is just a 10 percent chance they will succeed.

Beckstrom, now head of the Internet's key oversight agency, the Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers, said Thursday the attacks lacked sophistication and were just a "basic hack job" that a smart teenager could have launched. But others suggest it displayed characteristics of a higher-level, more coordinated effort.

"Just from looking at footprint, it was Bigfoot, not Bambi," said Charles Dodd, founder and chief technology officer for Nicor Cyber Security.

The assault began July 4 and targeted dozens of government and private sites in the United States, including some federal agencies that were shut down for days as the attack continued into Tuesday.

Treasury Department and Federal Trade Commission Web sites were knocked out by the blizzard of digital requests, while others, including the Pentagon and the White House, were able to fend it off with little disruption.

Jack Thomas Tomarchio, head of Nicor Cyber Security and a former deputy undersecretary at the Homeland Security Department, said the North Korean link, if true, is troubling because "they play by their own set of rules, so it is more difficult to calibrate how they're going to respond."

He added that the attacks overall show that the federal government still is quite vulnerable in cyber security,

and agencies have miles to go to plug the holes.

"This is not Pearl Harbor. I'm not trying to alarm the country," he said. "But we do have a serious intrusion problem."

Investigators, ranging from DHS staff members, those of the National Security Agency and a number of government contractors, are following three paths, according to Alan Paller, director of research at SANS Institute, a computer-security organization.

Copies of the malicious code, he said, have been shipped out to dozens of analysts and cyber security companies, who are now analyzing it, looking for errors or other hints that would point them to the author. Investigators, including many who speak foreign languages, are roaming the Internet chat rooms, hoping to find someone bragging about the attack or providing clues to its origin. Still others are following the electronic trail, tracing the attack back to the initially infected computers.

The attack, Paller said, was a wake-up call showing that hackers, without a big effort, were able to bring some federal agencies' Web presence to its knees.

What some analysts have been able to tell so far is that the program used in the attacks has elements of a fast-spreading e-mail worm from 2004 called "MyDoom." But, experts said it has enough new elements that some antivirus software did not immediately recognize it as a threat.

The malware spread fast. Joe Stewart, director of malware research for the counterthreat unit of SecureWorks Inc., who has been analyzing the code, says it appears to have been written around July 3, which means it infected tens of thousands of computers in just a few days, before they started attacking.

One clue linking the attack to the Korean peninsula was that part of the program appeared to have been written using a Korean-language Web browser, Stewart said. He cautioned that it was "not conclusive evidence of anything." □

AP source: Burris won't run for full Senate term

**By HENRY C. JACKSON
Associated Press Writer**

WASHINGTON — A Democratic official says Roland Burris will not run for a full Senate term in 2010. The source says Burris has begun informing Democratic officials about his decision. The official spoke anonymously because Burris had yet to announce his decision publicly.

Burris was appointed by disgraced Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich to fill the Senate seat vacated by President Barack Obama. His appointment was criticized from the moment it was announced and prompted calls for Burris to resign.

In the Senate, Burris has been treated as something of a pariah because of his ties to Blagojevich, who was arrested in part on allegations he tried to sell the Senate seat.

By not seeking a full term, Burris increases Democrats

chances of holding on to the Senate seat in 2010. Republicans had viewed Burris as a potentially easy target if he were to run for a full-term in the Senate.

The Democratic source said the former Illinois comptroller and attorney general was expected to announce his decision on Friday. Burris issued a press release Thursday evening that said he planned to make a "major announcement" at an event in Chicago on Friday.

Seeking a full-term in the Senate would have proven a tremendously difficult task for Burris. Sen. Richard Durbin, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat and the senior senator from Illinois, has said repeatedly he would not support Burris running for a full term. Other officials, including Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, have called for Burris to resign.

Burris also faced structural barriers, including anemic



In this Feb. 18, 2009 file photo, U.S. Sen. Roland Burris, D-Ill. speaks at the City Club of Chicago. A Democratic official says Burris will not run for a full Senate term in 2010. The source says Burris has begun informing Democratic officials about his decision. The official spoke anonymously because Burris had yet to announce his decision publicly.

Associated Press

fundraising. Recent polls have shown most Illinois voters do not support him, and he has repeatedly changed his story about his dealings with Blagojevich. □

Camp: Private pool turned away minority kids

RON TODT

Associated Press Writer

HUNTINGDON VALLEY, Pennsylvania (AP) — Members and officials of a private swimming pool in a predominantly white Philadelphia suburb reacted to a visiting group of minority children by asking them not to return and pulling other kids out of the water, a day camp director said, and the state of Pennsylvania is investigating. The Creative Steps camp in northeast Philadelphia had contracted for the 65 children at the day camp to go each Monday afternoon to The Valley Club in Huntingdon Valley, camp director Alethea Wright said Thursday. But shortly after they arrived June 29, she said, some black and Hispanic children reported hearing racial comments. “A couple of the children ran down saying, ‘Miss Wright, Miss Wright, they’re up there saying, “What are those black kids doing here?”’” she said. The gated club is on a leafy hillside in a village that straddles two townships with overwhelmingly white populations. It says it has a diverse, multiethnic membership.

Wright said she went to talk to a group of members at the top of the hill and heard one woman say she would see to it that the group, made of up of children in kindergarten through seventh grade, did not return.

“Some of the members began pulling their children out of the pool and were standing around with their arms folded,” Wright said. “Only three members left their children in the pool with us.” Several days later, the club refunded the camp’s \$1,950 without explanation, said Wright, who added that some parents are “weighing their options” on legal action.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission will immediately investigate, chairman Stephen A. Glassman said Thursday.

“Allegedly, this group was denied the use of a pool based on their race,” Glassman said. “If the allegations

prove to be true, this is illegal discrimination.”

The investigation was requested by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Democratic Sen. Arlen Specter issued a statement calling the allegations “extremely disturbing” and said he was looking into the matter.

The United States’ highest-profile black swimmer, Olympic gold medalist Cullen Jones, said “hearing about what’s happened to these 65 kids is both disturbing and appalling.”

Chuck Wielgus, executive director of USA Swimming, the governing body for the U.S. swim team, was stunned at the accusations.

“This is the sort of thing you’d hear about in 1966, during the height of the civil rights movement, not in 2009, and not in the City of Brotherly Love, of all places,” he said. Club president John Duesler told Philadelphia television station WTXF that several club members complained because the children “fundamentally

changed the atmosphere” at the pool but that the complaints didn’t involve race.

In a statement released on its Web site Thursday afternoon, the club called the allegations of racial discrimination “completely untrue” and claimed overcrowding from more than one outside camp was the problem.

“We had originally agreed to invite the camps to use our facility, knowing full well that the children from the camps were from multiethnic backgrounds,” it said. “Unfortunately, we quickly learned that we underestimated the capacity of our facilities and realized that we could not accommodate the number of children from these camps.”

The club said it “deplores discrimination.”

“Whatever comments may or may not have been made by an individual member is an opinion not shared by The Valley Club Board,” it said.

Amy Goldman said she’s been a member of the club for two years. She said the pool wasn’t particularly crowded and the children from Creative



Demonstrators hold up signs in front of the Valley Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pa., in response to allegations that the swim club blocked a group of minority children from joining weekly swims at the pool, Thursday, July 9, 2009. The club returned the deposit paid by the Creative Steps day camp, of which the children are members, citing issues such as overcrowding at the club.

Associated Press

Steps were “well behaved and respectful.”

She said there had been black members at the club in the past, though she couldn’t remember seeing any this year.

The club appeared closed Thursday afternoon, and the guard station at the entrance was unattended.

About two dozen protesters,

most of them white, held signs in front of the club’s locked gates and chanted slogans including, “Jim Crow swims here!”

Spencer Lewis, from Conshohocken, showed up with some young nieces and nephews and said he believes the club owes the children an apology. □

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Senate votes to keep Bush illegal worker rule



This Jan. 23, 2007 file photo shows Maricopa County Sheriff's Detention officers Ralphaelita Montoya, right, and Victor Navarette, beginning the initial on-scene processing of a suspected illegal immigrant, in Wickenburg, Ariz. As America's busiest immigrant smuggling hub, Arizona has earned the distinction as a place that's tough on people who sneak across the border.

Associated Press

SUZANNE GAMBOA, the Homeland Security tactic that requires employers
Associated Press Writer Department to hold on to fire workers whose names
WASHINGTON (AP) — to a Bush administration do not match their Social
The Senate wants to force immigration enforcement Security card numbers.

On a voice vote Thursday, the Senate approved an amendment to stop the department's plan to dump and replace the so-called "no-match" rule designed by the Bush administration. The Social Security card is the nearest document in the United States to national identity card. Republican Sen. David Vitter sponsored the amendment to the larger Homeland Security Department spending bill. The measure forbids the department from using any money to cancel the Bush administration rule aimed at curbing illegal immigration. The 2007 rule was designed to root out undocumented workers through so-called "no-match" letters, which the Social Security Administration sends employers when a worker's name and Social Security number do not match in the government's database. There can be various reasons for a mismatch: records are not updated when a woman changes her name after marrying or after a person becomes a U.S. citizen, typographical and other errors, or a person submits a fake or someone else's Social Security number. Vitter called the vote "a message to the Obama administration that we will not allow weak immigration laws."

He called illegal immigration

a serious concern for our country and said "we should be doing all that we can to fight this growing problem." Homeland Security Department spokesman Matthew Chandler said the Senate endorsement of Vitter's measure prevents real progress on immigration enforcement and is "a reflection of the old administration's strategy: all show, no substance." In contrast, the Obama administration is trying to implement effective enforcement, he said. "We hope that the smarter strategy will prevail in the end, because the country deserves a system that works," Chandler said. The American Civil Liberties Union filed the lawsuit that kept the rule tied in court. Employers, business groups, labor unions and others also opposed the rule. "Social Security no-match letters were never designed to be immigration enforcement tools, and they cannot and will not solve the problem of illegal immigration," said Joanne Lin, ACLU legislative counsel. The House version of the spending bill does not include the provision. A conference committee made up of members of both chambers will work out differences in the different versions of the bill. □

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This combination of booking photos released Thursday, July 9, 2009 by the Cook County, Ill. Sheriff's Office shows Carolyn Towns, 49, Terrence Nick, 39, Keith Nicks, 45, all of Chicago, and Maurice Dailey, 61, of Robbins, Ill. All four were charged Thursday, July 9, 2009 in an elaborate scheme in which hundreds of corpses were dug up at the Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, Ill., a historic black cemetery near Chicago, and strewn in a weeded area or reburied with other bodies so that plots could be resold, authorities said.

Associated Press

GRISLY PLOT

Continued from Page B1

As frantic relatives of the deceased descended on the Burr Oak Cemetery — the final resting place of lynching victim Emmett Till, blues singers Willie Dixon and Dinah Washington — investigators said it could be months before they fully understand what took place.

More than a dozen FBI agents would help sort through the evidence and identify bodies at the cemetery in Alsip, 12 miles south of Chicago, Sheriff Tom Dart said.

The civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson, flanked by distraught family members, expressed the outrage he was feeling at the workers accused of tossing human remains into a remote area of a cemetery.

"In my judgment, there should be no bail for them, there should be really a special place in hell for these graveyard thieves who have done so much, hurt these families," he said.

For much of the day, all dozens of people waited in line to get answers, police assigned numbers for them, telling some to return later in the day.

"I feel betrayed and violated," said Gregory Mannie, with four relatives buried there, who said he was particularly worried about his grandmother, whose grave is in a more secluded area that he did not visit as often as the others.

"It's almost like killing them all over again," he said.

The suspects, all of whom are black, have each been charged with one count of dismembering a human body, a felony.

Bond was set at \$250,000 for the cemetery's manager, and at \$200,000 for the other three, who are gravediggers. It could not immediately be determined if any of them had attorneys. Prosecutors said they didn't know, and calls to the public defender's office were not immediately returned.

Authorities said Towns also pocketed donations she elicited for an Emmett Till memorial museum. She has not been charged in connection with those allegations.

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart said Till's grave was not disturbed, but he did not have information about the graves of Washington and others.

The owner of the cemetery, Perpetua Inc., said in a statement Thursday that the company is cooperating with investigators.

"We will make every attempt to insure and maintain the dignity of those that have been entrusted to our care," the company said. □



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U.S. extradites former coup leader to Bolivia



In this handout photo provided by Bolivia's State Press Agency (ABI), Bolivia's Luis Arce Gomez, seated in a wheelchair, is escorted by police after being extradited from the US to Bolivia, in El Alto, Bolivia, Thursday, July 9, 2009. Gomez, 71, was sentenced in 1993 to 30 years in jail for political assassinations during Bolivia's last dictatorship in the 1980's. Gomez served 15 years in U.S. prisons on drug trafficking charges, according to Bolivia's Vice Minister Marcos Farfan.

Associated Press

CARLOS VALDEZ

Associated Press Writer

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — The United States deported a

key figure in Bolivia's last military dictatorship back home Thursday to serve a 30-year prison sentence for

crimes including genocide and political assassinations.

Luis Arce Gomez, 71, known as "the minister of cocaine," took part in the July 1980 coup led by then-Gen. Luis Garcia Meza and backed by drug traffickers.

As interior minister, he gained a reputation for ruthlessness for personally torturing political prisoners.

Arce Gomez had been imprisoned in Miami on a 1991 drug-trafficking conviction.

A U.S. judge denied him political asylum after his November 2007 release, a decision that President Evo Morales applauded Thursday.

"I want to recognize the work of the U.S. justice system," Morales told a news conference. "It is a historic day for human rights."

U.S.-Bolivian relations have been strained since Morales, a leftist, former coca-growers'

union leader, expelled the U.S. ambassador and U.S. drug agents last year, accusing them of helping incite the pro-autonomy opposition. The U.S. has denied the accusation.

A white-bearded Luis Arce Gomez was escorted by FBI agents after arriving at the El Alto airport early Thursday.

Stepping off the plane, he asked for oxygen to compensate for the 12,500-foot altitude. After a medical exam, Arce Gomez was driven to Chonchocoro prison, on La Paz's outskirts.

As Garcia Meza's right-hand man, Arce Gomez rounded up hundreds of journalists, political and labor leaders and church officials, even hiring the late Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie as an adviser.

Dozens of opposition figures accused of communist sympathies were forcibly disappeared, tortured and assassinated.

The dictatorship only lasted a year, however, and both men fled into exile.

In 1989, Arce Gomez was captured in eastern Bolivia and extradited to the United States, where he was convicted of drug trafficking and sentenced to 30 years. Affidavits from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said he extorted cocaine traffickers while serving as interior minister.

In 1993, a Bolivian court convicted him in absentia of a series of crimes including armed insurrection and genocide. He was sentenced to 30 years without parole.

Garcia Meza, 79, is also serving a 30-year prison term at Chonchocoro prison. He was arrested in 1994 in Brazil after also being convicted in absentia. Garcia Meza has spent much of the last few years in a military hospital. □



SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF JULY 9 - JULY 15

*matinee: saturday & sunday | late show: friday and saturday

AT RENAISSANCE - ORANJESTAD

R	THE HANGOVER	daily: 5:50 matinee: 1:30	8:00 late show: 12:15	10:05 12:15	NEW
R	PUBLIC ENEMIES	daily: 5:45 matinee: 12:05	8:45 late show: 11:30		
PG-13	TRANSFORMER 2	daily: 6:00 matinee: 12:00	9:00 late show: 11:50		
R	THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123	daily: 7:10 matinee: 11:45		9:30 11:45	
PG-13	YEAR ONE	daily: 5:00 matinee: 12:40	7:10 late show: 11:20	9:15 11:20	
PG-13	TERMINATOR SALVATION	daily: 8:15 matinee: 11:00			
PG	ICE AGE 3 DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS	daily: 4:15 matinee: 12:20	6:15 late show: 11:00		3D
PG	IMAGINE THAT	daily: 4:55 matinee: 12:10	2:30 late show: 11:00		

AT PASEO HERENCIA

R	THE HANGOVER	daily: 5:35 matinee: 1:15	7:45 late show: 12:00	9:50 12:00	NEW
R	PUBLIC ENEMIES	daily: 5:45 matinee: 12:05	8:45 late show: 11:35		
PG-13	THE PROPOSAL	daily: 4:30 matinee: 12:10	6:45 late show: 11:15	9:00 11:15	
PG-13	LAND OF THE LOST	daily: 10:00 matinee: 12:05			
R	THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123	daily: 7:40 matinee: 12:10		10:00 12:10	
PG	ICE AGE 3 DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS	daily: 4:00 matinee: 12:00	6:00 late show: 8:00		3D
PG-13	TRANSFORMER 2	daily: 5:40 matinee: 12:05	8:30 late show: 11:25		
PG-13	THE SOLOIST	daily: 5:15 matinee: 12:20	2:45 late show: 11:25		

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In this photo taken by an individual not employed by the Associated Press and obtained by the AP outside Iran shows Iranian police men protect themselves from tear gas fired during an opposition rally in Tehran, Iran, Thursday, July 9, 2009.

Associated Press

IRAN CRACKDOWN

Continued from Page B1

Onlookers and pedestrians often gave their support. In side streets near the university, police were chasing young activists, and when they caught one, passers-by chanted "let him go, let him go," until the policemen released him. Elsewhere, residents let fleeing demonstrators slip into their homes to elude police, witnesses said.

All witnesses spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of government reprisals. Iranian authorities have imposed restrictions that ban reporters from leaving their offices to cover demonstrations.

Many of the marchers were young men and women, some wearing green surgical masks, the color of Mousavi's movement, but older people joined them in some places. Vehicles caught in traffic honked their horns in support of the marchers, witnesses said. Police were seen with a pile of license plates, apparently pried off honking cars in order to investigate the drivers later, the witnesses said.

Soon after the confrontations began, mobile phone service was cut off in central Tehran, a step that was also taken during the height of the postelection protests to cut off communications. Mobile phone messaging has been off for the past three days, apparently to disrupt attempts at planning.

The calls for a new march have been circulating for days on social networking Web sites and pro-opposition Web sites. Opposition supporters planned the marches to coincide with the anniversary Thursday of a 1999 attack by Basij on a Tehran University dorm to stop protests in which one student was killed. Demonstrators dispersed by nightfall. But after sunset, shouts of "death to the dictator" could be heard from rooftops around the city — a half-hour nightly ritual by Mousavi supporters that has continued even since the previous crackdown.

Mousavi and his pro-reform supporters say he won the election, which official results showed as a landslide victory for incumbent hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Days of massive demonstrations erupted, until supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared the results valid and warned that unrest would not be tolerated.

In the crackdown that followed, at least 20 protesters and seven Basijis were killed, according to police.

Police have said 1,000 people were arrested in the crackdown and that most have since been released. But prosecutor-general Qorban-Ali Dorri Najafabadi said Wednesday that 2,500 people were arrested and that 500 of them could face trial, Press TV reported. The remainder have been released, Najafabadi said.

Arrests have continued over the past week, with police rounding up dozens of activists, journalists and bloggers.

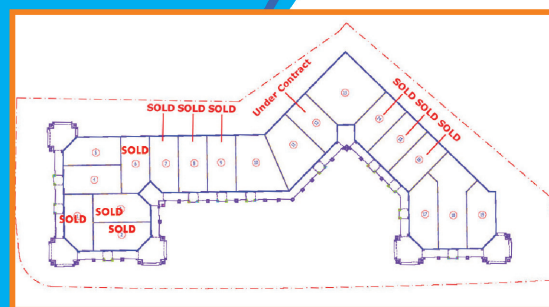
In the latest detentions, prominent human rights lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah was taken away by security forces from his office Wednesday along with his daughter and three other members of his staff, the pro-opposition news Web site Norouz reported. □

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An Iraqi Army soldier examines a vehicle destroyed in a roadside bomb attack near a market in the Shiite enclave of Sadr City in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, July 9, 2009.

U.S. PULLBACK *Continued from Page B1*

U.S. officials said they believe the Iranians, detained in northern Iraq in January 2007, had facilitated attacks on American-led forces but handed them over to the Iraqi government at its request because they were obliged to do so under a U.S.-Iraqi security agreement. The U.S. State Department said it was concerned their release could present a security threat to American troops in Iraq. Iraq's foreign minister, Hoshyar Zebari, called the release a "good initiative" that could encourage dialogue between Washington and Tehran, which are longtime foes. Iranian Embassy spokesman Amir Arshadi said Iraq had

Associated Press transferred the Iranians, described by their government as diplomats, to the embassy. Washington believes they are associated with the Quds Force, part of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard Corps, and that they trained Iraqi militants. The carnage within Iraqi borders Thursday was a sign that insurgents remain intent on destabilizing Iraq as the United States shifts its focus to the war in Afghanistan. Attacks are down sharply from past years of war and militants have been driven from many strongholds, but they routinely inflict casualties in Baghdad and northern Iraq, a cauldron of ethnic and sectarian tension. The most lethal attack Thursday was in the northern city of Tal

Afar, where women sat in the street amid torn and bloodied bodies in the aftermath of suicide bombings, wailing and beating their chests in grief. Several men crouched and wept into their hands. Others rushed the wounded to ambulances; some used a bed sheet as a makeshift stretcher. In a statement on his Web site, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani condemned the attacks and said the "forces of evil and terrorism" were trying in vain to demoralize Iraqi security forces and the civilian population. Some 130,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, but they have a much lower profile and are preparing for a complete pullout by the end of 2011. Iraqi attitudes are mixed, with some rejoicing over the absence of American troops in their streets and a new sense of sovereignty, and others worried that extremists will now have more freedom to operate. "Our security forces are still weak, with poor intelligence," said Saed Rahim, a government employee in Baghdad. "Deploying more unqualified troops into the streets does not necessarily lead to better results." The day's violence began at 6:30 a.m., when a suicide bomber in a police uniform and carrying a radio and a pistol knocked on the door

of an investigator in the anti-terrorism police force in Tal Afar. When the officer opened the door, the bomber detonated his explosive belt, killing the officer, his wife and son, said Maj. Gen. Khalid al-Hamadani, police chief of the northern Ninevah province. As people gathered in the aftermath, another suicide bomber detonated his explosives belt, al-Hamadani said. The coordinated attack killed a total of 38 people and injured 66. Army Brig. Abdul-Rahman Abu Raghef said the first suicide bomber was a local resident who had been jailed for one year on suspicion of terrorism, but was released in an amnesty in June. A day earlier, car bombs in two Shiite villages near Mosul, another northern Iraqi city, killed 16 civilians and injured more than two dozen. Haneen Qaddo, a lawmaker representing Shiites in the Mosul region, complained about a "big security vacuum" in the north and said Kurdish forces, known as peshmerga, should withdraw from some areas and allow Iraqi army units to deploy. Tensions between Iraqi Arabs and Kurds, who run a virtual mini-state in part of northern Iraq, are considered a major threat to long-term stability. Factions are maneuvering for control of Kirkuk, a disputed northern city in an oil-rich

area that is seen as a flash point for conflict. Police there said a civilian bystander died in a bomb attack on a police patrol on Thursday. Insurgents also struck Baghdad on Thursday morning, detonating bombs that killed 18 people and injured dozens. Eight of them died and 30 were injured in coordinated blasts near an outdoor market in the Shiite district of Sadr City, said Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Mousawi, spokesman for the city's operations command center. Hassan Abdullah, a vegetable salesman, said he heard the first blast and went to see what was happening when a second bomb hidden in trash about 100 yards away exploded. He was taken to a hospital with hand and leg injuries. In the Karrada district of central Baghdad, one civilian died in a bomb attack on the convoy of Central Bank Gov. Sinan al-Shibibi, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. The governor was unharmed. In Washington, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the U.S. had to release the Iranians under a U.S.-Iraqi security agreement that took effect in January. Kelly said the release was not part of a deal or prisoner exchange with Tehran. □

Two men and a mediator: Can Arias help Honduras?

JUAN CARLOS LLORCA

Associated Press Writer

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — Talks to resolve the leadership crisis in Honduras got on track Thursday, with both sides holding closed-door meetings with Costa Rican President Oscar Arias to discuss a coup that has generated fears of political instability in the region. Ousted Honduran president Manuel Zelaya appeared first, and left shortly before the arrival of the man who replaced him after a military coup, his former friend and political ally Roberto Micheletti.

If Zelaya offered any concessions, he wasn't talking about them. As he headed back to his hotel, Zelaya called for "the reestablishment of the state of law, democracy and the return of the president elected by the Honduran people." Micheletti, for his part, insists that Zelaya must relinquish any claim to the presidency. After meeting with Arias, Micheletti named four officials who will represent him in future negotiations and said he was returning to Honduras. He ruled out, for now, a face-to-face encounter with Zelaya.

The interim Honduran leader said he was "satisfied" with the meeting and that presidential elections would be held in November as planned.

Even getting both sides to appear in the same city was an achievement for Arias — something that hasn't happened since the leftist Zelaya surrendered under gunfire and was flown out of his country by masked soldiers on June 28.

This coup crisis has become one of the biggest tests so far for the Obama administration in Latin America.

OAS Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza expressed concern that if the Honduran crisis is not resolved, it could leave the door open for other coups in Latin America.

"I'm not going to mention countries," Insulza told reporters in Washington on Thursday.

Arias — who won his Nobel for helping Central Americans resolve their civil wars — was

invited to mediate by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. That move effectively sidelined Venezuelan

President Hugo Chavez, who had lent Zelaya a Venezuelan plane and other support, and cast the crisis as an epic battle between the poor and the region's "oligarchies."

President Barack Obama has framed the issue in non-ideological terms, encouraging leaders from the left and right to come together to support the institutions of democracy. Obama has insisted that Zelaya be restored to power, but "not because we agree with him," he told an audience in Russia.

"We do so because we respect the universal principle that people should choose their own leaders, whether they are leaders we agree with or not." U.S. State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said no U.S. representatives were participating in the mediation sessions. "We are keenly interested in these talks. We want to see a good outcome that restores the democratic order in Honduras. But I just want to emphasize, this is President Arias', these are his talks."

In Honduras on Thursday, thousands of Zelaya's supporters and detractors continued marching in the streets. Pro-Zelaya forces cut off several highways, including a key southern truck route to Nicaragua and El Salvador. Backers of the Micheletti government demonstrated in the northern industrial city of San Pedro Sula and other places.

In contrast, very few people — almost all journalists — showed up at the metal security gates placed in front of Arias' home, a one-story house in a residential neighborhood of San Jose. The only guards were about two dozen unarmed tourism police wearing polo shirts.

Both Zelaya and Micheletti have said there is nothing to negotiate — that the other man can't possibly be president of Honduras. Oscar Arias also sought to dampen expectations, saying before the talks that "in two days there could be a solution or it



Honduras' interim President Roberto Micheletti, left, shakes hands with Costa Rica's President Oscar Arias outside Arias' residence in San Jose, Thursday, July 9, 2009. Micheletti arrived to participate in negotiations with Honduras' ousted President Manuel Zelaya, with Costa Rica's President Oscar Arias acting as mediator. Honduras' army seized Zelaya and flew him out of the country on June 28 after the courts and Congress accused him of violating the constitution.

could be that in two months there is no solution."

And Micheletti did express some optimism after his plane touched down. "We will work ceaselessly to find a successful solution to the present situation," Micheletti said, committing to "trying to solve my country's internal differences in a peaceful way." Micheletti, a congressional leader who was named president by legislators following the coup, has already replaced his foreign minister, who caused a flap by repeatedly referring to Obama as "a little black man" and a "little black field hand."

Enrique Ortez, now replaced by Honduras' former ambassador in Washington, Roberto Flores, has been a prominent spokesman for Micheletti, arguing that the coup was legal because congress and the Supreme Court had ruled Zelaya was illegally pursuing a referendum to change the constitution.

The world has rallied behind Zelaya. The United Nations and the Organization of American States also have demanded he be returned to power, imposing or threatening sanctions and aid cuts. Venezuela said it is canceling shipments of subsidized oil, and the U.S. suspended more than \$18 million in military assistance and development

aid programs. No other country has recognized the interim administration.

But support for Zelaya is much less certain inside the impoverished country.

Some Zelaya supporters claim Honduras' wealthy class backed the military action because Zelaya raised the

minimum wage and pushed other policies that favor the poor. Micheletti counters that Zelaya and Chavez stoked class divisions.

Before the talks began, Zelaya offered to drop his aspirations for a constitutional change that might allow him to run for another term. □

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Phelps erases world record in 100 butterfly

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)

— Michael Phelps broke the world record in the 100-meter butterfly at the U.S. championships on Thursday, giving him ownership of five individual world marks.

The 14-time Olympic gold medalist swam the two-lap final in 50.22 seconds at the Indiana University Natatorium. He lowered Ian Crocker's mark of 50.40 set at the 2005 world championships in Montreal.

Phelps led at 50 meters with a split of 23.83, just three-tenths off world-record pace. Known for his strong finishes, he pulled clear to beat Tyler McGill, who touched in 51.06. Aaron Peirsol was third in 51.30.

"Crock had a ton more first 50 speed than I did. That's something I've really been working on," Phelps said. "I've always been able to come home pretty strong. I finally got the front half a little bit faster. If I can get that even faster, I'll be in better shape."

Phelps holds world records in the 100 and 200 flies, 200 and 400 individual medleys, and the 200 free.

Phelps had owned the 100 fly mark for a day at the 2003 worlds in Barcelona. But Crocker took it from him a day later, then lowered it twice more. □



Ferrari Formula One driver Felipe Massa of Brazil, bottom, leads Brawn GP driver Jensen Button of Britain during the British Formula One Grand Prix at the Silverstone racetrack, in Silverstone, England, Sunday, June 21 2009.

Associated Press

F1 breakaway series remains alive

PAUL LOGOTHETIS

AP Auto Racing Writer

NUERBURGRING, Germany (AP)—Formula One's leading teams revived their threat to form a breakaway series on Thursday despite FIA insisting that a deal to end the long-running saga over regulations could be made "in the coming days."

F1's fragile peace was thrown into doubt again on Wednesday when the Formula One Teams Association walked out of a meeting with FIA after being told it had not been entered into the 2010 championship and would have no say in finalizing cost-cutting measures.

"We cannot sit back and wait."

Continued on Page B13

New Pistons coach is Cavs' John Kuester

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)—In his decade running the Detroit Pistons, Joe Dumars hasn't been known for showing patience with head coaches. He insists that is about to change.

Moments after introducing Cavaliers assistant John Kuester as Detroit's sixth coach in 10 years, Dumars said Thursday that Kuester "might have the most job security of anyone in the NBA."

"Bless you, Joe," said Kuester with a laugh. Kuester replaces Michael Curry, who was fired on June 30 after going 39-43 in his first season and being swept by Cleveland in the first round of the playoffs. Detroit had reached the Eastern Conference finals in the previous six seasons under Rick Carlisle, Larry Brown and Flip Saunders.

Detroit has almost completely turned over that roster, with only Richard Hamilton(notes) and Tayshaun Prince(notes) remaining from the 2003-04 championship team. They added Charlie Villanueva(notes) and Ben Gordon(notes) in the first hours of free agency.

"For the last seven years, the criteria for success here has been making the finals," said Dumars, the team's president of basketball operations. "That's not the gun that will be held to John's head. Right now, we're looking to move this franchise back in the right direction."

When Dumars fired Curry, he said he wanted a coach with more experience and there was speculation that veterans like Doug Collins or Avery Johnson would take the

reins. Neither situation came together, though Dumars did talk with Johnson about the job. Kuester has 19 years of NBA experience, including 13 as an assistant with five teams, but hasn't been a pro head coach.

He replaced Rick Pitino at Boston University in 1983 and later spent five seasons coaching George Washington. "I told (Curry) that it wasn't fair to put an inexperienced coach in this position," Dumars said. "I still think that's the case—John has seen a lot more things in his 19 years in the NBA than Michael has had a chance to see."

Kuester was Brown's assistant when the Pistons upset the Lakers in the 2004 finals, and said that experience helped him decide to tackle the rebuilding job in Detroit. □



Thor Hushovd of Norway reacts as he crosses the finish line to win the sixth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 112.7 miles with start in Girona and finish in Barcelona, Spain, Thursday July 9, 2009. Right is Oscar Freire of Spain who took a second place.

Associated Press

Hushovd wins 6th Tour stage in Spain

JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press Writer

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

— Norway's Thor Hushovd defied the rain and the treacherous conditions to win the sixth stage of the Tour de France in a mass sprint finish on Thursday.

Fabian Cancellara of Switzerland kept the yellow jersey, with just a split-second lead over seven-time champion Lance Armstrong after the race entered Spain with a 112.8-mile trek from Girona to Barcelona.

Hushovd, of the Cervelo team, collected his seventh Tour stage win by edging out two Spaniards — three-time world champion Oscar Freire in second, and Jose Joaquin Rojas in third.

"I'm just too, too happy," said Hushovd, who won the best sprinter's jersey at the 2005 Tour.

Continued on Page B12

Reports: LPGA commissioner on the way out

BETHLEHEM, Pennsylvania (AP) — U.S. LPGA commissioner Carolyn Bivens reportedly is on the way out as leader of the tour after calls for her resignation by key players. Golf Digest and GolfWeek Magazine reported on their Web sites on Thursday that the embattled commissioner will be replaced.

Golf Digest cites multiple sources saying Bivens' four-year tenure could end as soon as next week.

Bivens has 18 months left on a three-year contract extension signed in 2008. Citing a source in tournament management, Golf Digest reported that a general agreement on financial terms was reached with Bivens late Wednesday. A faction of tour players had sent a letter to the U.S. LPGA Tour board seeking Bivens' resignation. The letter said the tour's problems can't be blamed on a poor economy and a new leader was needed. All that remains to be determined now, according to Golf Digest, is when Bivens leaves. "She's gone. It's just a question of whether it's a firing or a resignation," one veteran player, described as a Bivens supporter, told Golf Digest. "And she doesn't deserve any of it."

Tour spokesman David Higdon reiterated his statement from earlier in the week, saying the tour will not comment on internal matters.

The tour has lost seven tournaments since 2007, and there have been a number of controversies under Bivens' tenure.

In 2008, she proposed an English-only policy for tour players, but it was never instituted. The U.S. LPGA includes 121 international players from 26 countries, including 45 from South Korea.

In October 2006, she was accused by officials of the now-defunct tour event near Atlantic City, New Jersey of backing out on a promise to maintain a longtime event.

The news that Bivens will soon leave the organization came near the completion of the first round of the U.S. Women's Open — the biggest weekend of the season in women's golf.

But players have spent the week sidestepping questions about the brouhaha, forced to deal with the controversy as much as the golf course.

The letter sent to the U.S. LPGA Tour board was reportedly signed by more than a dozen players, GolfWeek Magazine

reported when it broke the story on Monday.

Golf Digest reported the letter was signed by marquee tour players Paula Creamer, Morgan Pressel, Lorena Ochoa, Cristie Kerr, Se Ri Pak, Suzann Pettersen and Natalie Gulbis, among others. In it, the players called for the installation of temporary leadership while a search is conducted for a new commissioner, the magazine reported.

A source involved with tournament ownership told Golf Digest, "No confidence by the players is a dagger in her heart."

Two-time U.S. Women's Open champion Meg Mallon wanted the tour's troubles addressed, but would have rather waited until after the season. "It's a very sad thing that is going on," Mallon told The Associated Press after her first round of the Open, and before news of Bivens' apparent demise was reported. "I was a proponent of having the problems solved after the end of the year. ... As far as that goes, I wish it wasn't happening right now." □



FILE - In this Feb. 12, 2009 file photo, LPGA commissioner Carolyn Bivens announces during a news conference in Beverly Hills, Calif., that the LPGA and JoongAng Broadcasting Corporation, JBC, have agreed to a five-year partnership that names J Golf, the LPGA's official South Korean media rights partner starting in 2010.

Associated Press

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AL Roundup

Jones hits 3 homers as Rangers down Angels



Texas Rangers' Andruw Jones watches his solo home run against the Los Angeles Angels during the third inning of a baseball game in Anaheim, Calif., Wednesday, July 8, 2009.

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, California (AP) — Andruw Jones homered in his first three at-bats as the Texas Rangers routed the Los Angeles Angels 8-1 on Wednesday to take the outright lead in their American League West division race. Jones hit home runs in the first and third innings, the

latter giving Texas a 4-0 lead. He added a solo shot in the fifth. With a chance to tie the major league record for home runs in a game, Jones popped out in the sixth and struck out in the ninth. The Rangers hit five homers in all, matching their season high.

It was the second three-homer game for Jones, who did it in 2007 against Philadelphia.

Yankees 4, Twins 3

In Minneapolis, pitcher A.J. Burnett won his third straight start, steering New York to a narrow win over Minnesota. Burnett pitched 6-1/3 innings, walking four and giving up seven hits.

Brett Gardner's two-run single helped New York build an early lead.

Rays 10, Blue Jays 9

In St. Petersburg, Florida, Ben Zobrist hit a three-run homer and the winning RBI single with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning to help Tampa Bay edge Toronto.

Zobrist homered in the fourth inning. His winning hit with two outs drove in Carl Crawford, who earlier singled before stealing second and third.

Toronto wiped out deficits of 5-2 and 9-6 before wasting an opportunity to go ahead when it stranded two runners in the eighth.

Red Sox 5, Athletics 4

In Boston, veteran pitcher

Tim Wakefield earned his AL-leading 11th victory as Boston squeezed past Oakland.

Wakefield left to a standing ovation in the seventh inning in his final scheduled start before the All-Star game, for which he has been elected for the first time. The 42-year-old knuckleballer is 9-0 in his past 11 starts at Fenway Park.

Boston tied the game 1-1 in the sixth, then David Ortiz connected for a three-run shot later in the inning.

Oakland's Jack Cust struck out with two runners on base to end the game.

Tigers 3, Royals 1

In Detroit, rookie pitcher Lucas French, making his second major-league start, outdueled Kansas City ace Zack Greinke to guide Detroit to victory.

French held the Royals to one run in 6 1-3 innings while Greinke gave up three runs, all in the first two innings, while striking out nine.

Orioles 5, Mariners 3

In Seattle, Baltimore took advantage of two errors by Seattle second baseman Jose Lopez to rally for five runs in

the ninth inning.

Entering the ninth with a 3-0 lead, Mariners closer David Aardsma gave up a double, a walk and a single to load the bases.

After an infield single narrowed the deficit to 3-1, Baltimore's Nick Markakis hit a potential double-play ball to Lopez, who dropped it, allowing a second run to score. A subsequent two-run single put the Orioles up 4-3.

Lopez had a throwing error later in the inning that let the last run score. He had given the Mariners a 2-0 lead in the first with a homer.

White Sox 5, Indians 1

In Chicago, pitcher Jose Contreras allowed just one run over 6 1-3 innings, directing Chicago's win over Cleveland.

In other AL games it was, Baltimore 5, Seattle 3; Detroit 3, Kansas City 1; Tampa Bay 10, Toronto 9; Boston 5, Oakland 4; N.Y. Yankees 4, Minnesota 3; Chicago White Sox 5, Cleveland 1; and Texas 8, L.A. Angels 1. □

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TOUR

Continued from Page B10

"It's true that it was a nervous day too, because it was raining and the roads were slippery."

They clocked 4 hours, 21 minutes, 33 seconds for the stage, the same time as 40 other riders including Armstrong and Cancellara in the main pack of favorites.

Breakaway riders including Britain's David Millar repeatedly attacked, only to be reeled in by the finish. He was caught with little more than 0.6 mile left to go.

The pack set off at a swift pace of about 29 miles an hour for the first 25 kilometers. Breakaway attempts by riders such as Americans David Zabriskie and George Hincapie were quickly reeled in by the peloton.

Millar was in either alone in the lead or in the breakaway group for about three-quarters of the stage, and at one point had enough of a gap on Cancellara to be the overall leader in mid-stage.

Two crashes marred the last 6 miles — one involving Japanese rider Yukiya Arashiro, another involving former world champion Tom Boonen of Belgium, one of Hushovd's main rivals.

The three-week race enters a new phase on Friday with the first big mountains in the seventh stage.

"Tomorrow is an important day," Armstrong said. "I don't know if it's THE most important day, but it's definitely a big appointment on

this Tour."

The 139.2-mile ride from Barcelona to Arcalis, Andorra, features five ascents including the Category 1 Serra Seca pass, and an uphill finish on one of cycling's toughest climbs.

Alberto Contador, the 2007 Tour champion and perhaps the top pre-race favorite, has said he's eager to get to the mountains — and he could make his move then.

Cancellara has been the only man to wear the yellow jersey this year. Armstrong is only milliseconds behind, while Contador is third, 19 seconds back.

The Swiss rider isn't expected to fare as well as Contador, Armstrong and other strong climbers in the mountains. Cancellara seemed a bit resigned to the prospect he might now lose the lead.

"What do I have to do tomorrow? It's a good question," he said.

"It's been a beautiful week to be in this yellow jersey ... I'm going to try to defend it but I don't know how well I can do."

Other strong climbers and potential title contenders who have been distanced on the flat include 2008 Tour winner Carlos Sastre, two-time runner up Cadel Evans, and brothers Andy and Frank Schleck.

"Tomorrow is a very long stage and it could suit him well," Contador said of Sastre on Spain's TVE television. "If I see a situation that is favorable to me, and if my legs respond, then I'm going to try and go for it." □



FIA President Max Mosley, right and Bernie Ecclestone, who owns F1's commercial rights, attend a meeting in Paris Wednesday June 24, 2009. FIA president Max Mosley reached a deal Wednesday to stop eight rebel Formula One teams forming a breakaway series.

Associated Press

F1

Continued from Page B10

We have to keep all options open," BMW Sauber motorsport director Mario Theissen said on Thursday at the German Grand Prix. "And that means we have to look at the other points as well. We have to prepare for all possibilities."

Earlier, FIA issued a statement — titled "Setting the Record Straight" — in response to the teams' walkout in which it said that ongoing negotiations would yield a solution quickly.

"I would call (that) optimistic," said Theissen, who confirmed negotiations were ongoing. Although there had been progress "there are still some irritating efforts that have surprised us."

The irritation appears to be FIA president Max Mosley, whose insistence on possibly running for a fifth term could be a stumbling block.

In negotiating a solution last month, the teams signed on to reduce costs to 1990s level if the 69-year-old lawyer agreed to stand aside until his term ended in October. But FOTA's rush to celebrate that coup appears to have stirred Mosley and thrown everything into doubt.

Teams did not come out and say it, but it was obvious that a solution would entail Mosley sticking to the original deal.

"The commercial rights holder understands what is required to get our signatures," said Toyota president John Howett, "and the agreement with them is very close."

FIA said on Thursday that Mosley had twice made Ferrari president Luca di Montezemelo aware that the five teams which had signed up unconditionally to 2010 regulations — Williams, Force India, US F1, Campos Meta and Manor Grand Prix — would set those rules. Ferrari, McLaren, Renault, Toyota, Red Bull, Toro Rosso and Brawn GP all lodged conditional entries that they considered validated once they were admitted, which would allow them to vote.

"The entered teams have a contract with the FIA not even the General Assembly or World Council can abrogate," FIA's statement read. "Anyone with an elementary knowledge of motor sport governance knows this. To suggest FOTA were only made aware of this during the meetings of yesterday is quite simply untrue."

Theissen didn't expect a solution at the Nuerburgring, and said negotiations with F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone would continue despite the commercial rights boss praising Adolf Hitler's leadership in an interview.

"Obviously wrong," Theissen said in reference to the comments, for which Ecclestone has since apologized. "Disgusting. Apparently he was shocked himself when he was confronted with what he said."

F1 drivers were also losing interest in a saga spawned out of the global financial crisis that has turned into a long-running soap opera of mudslinging proportions.

"You lose interest reading these stories. Things seem to go up and down all the time," Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen said. "It changes every day." □

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Honduras busca salida a crisis con ayuda Costa Rica

SAN JOSE (Reuters) - El presidente costarricense y premio Nobel de la Paz, Oscar Arias, se reunía el jueves como mediador con el depuesto líder hondureño Manuel Zelaya y el mandatario interino Roberto Micheletti, en un intento de buscar una salida a la crisis desatada por el golpe de Estado.

Sin embargo, las posiciones radicales de unos y otros parecen dejar poco margen de maniobra para que el diálogo destrabe la estancada situación en el país centroamericano, protagonista de la peor crisis en la región en dos décadas.

“Lo que quiero es ayudar a resolver este problema porque el pueblo hondureño no se merece que haya más sangre derramada y no quiero ver morir a más gente inocente en las calles de Tegucigalpa”, dijo Arias, que ganó el Nobel por su trabajo para poner fin a conflictos militares y guerras civiles que asolaron Centroamérica durante la Guerra Fría.

Zelaya fue depuesto hace casi dos semanas por un grupo de militares que lo sacó de su casa a punta de rifle, lo subió en un avión y lo expulsó a Costa Rica cuando buscaba hacer una consulta para abrir la posibilidad de una reelección. La crisis desató en Honduras protestas a favor y en contra de Zelaya, que dejaron al menos un simpatizante del derrocado mandatario muerto. La comunidad internacional condenó el golpe y exhortó al Gobierno interino a restituir a Zelaya.

Arias mantuvo en su residencia privada un encuentro con Zelaya y sostenía otro con Micheletti, mientras decenas de personas se manifestaban alrededor de la casa de Arias contra el presidente interino de Honduras gritando “Fuera militares, fuera ‘Goriletti’”.

Arias planeaba reunir por la tarde a los dos rivales e intentar llegar a una solución al conflicto, según un portavoz de la presidencia de Costa Rica.

Al salir de su encuentro con el presidente costarricense, Zelaya agradeció su mediación e insistió en la necesidad de que sea restablecido el orden



El presidente interino de Honduras Roberto Micheletti habla con la prensa en el aeropuerto Juan Santamaría en San José, Costa Rica, 9 jul 2009. REUTERS/Paul Aragon

constitucional y su Gobierno. “Creemos que hemos sido congruentes con la posición de Honduras que es la restitución del Estado de derecho, la restitución de la democracia y la restitución como lo ha pedido la organización de Naciones Unidas y la OEA, del ejercicio del presidente electo por el pueblo hondureño”, dijo Zelaya.

Antes del encuentro, el Gobierno interino -que tiene respaldo de los mayores partidos políticos, la Corte Suprema y empresarios de Honduras- no había alimentado muchas esperanzas de encontrar una salida al enfatizar que el retorno de Zelaya no es negociable, pese a los reclamos de distintos países del mundo y a la presión de organismos internacionales.

“Trabajaremos incansablemente para alcanzar una solución exitosa a la presente situación. Tenemos plena confianza que la solución la hallaremos en el marco de Constitución, la cual garantiza la libertad de todos los hondureños”, dijo Micheletti al llegar al aeropuerto de la capital costarricense.

“En mi próxima visita a Costa Rica el pueblo bello de este hermano país me recibirá como hoy lo hace mi pueblo, como el presidente constitucional de la República de Honduras”, acotó.

Desde Washington, el secretario general de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA), José Miguel Insulza, dijo que para resolver la crisis se podrían adelantar las elecciones, crear un Gobierno de unidad nacional, decidir una amnistía o enjuiciar a personas determinadas, entre otras opciones.

“La piedra de tope es que el Gobierno de facto acepte el retorno del Gobierno constitucional. Todo lo demás es conversable”, explicó.

A pesar de las posiciones intransigentes, la presión internacional y la amenaza de duras sanciones económicas contra Honduras, podrían llevar a las partes a ceder. □

Según sondeo

Un 41% de hondureños justifica derrocamiento de Zelaya



El derrocado presidente de Honduras Manuel Zelaya camina con el ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Costa Rica, Bruno Stagno, a su arribo en Alajuela, Costa Rica, 8 jul 2009. REUTERS/Juan Carlos Ulate

TEGUCIGALPA (Reuters) - Un 41 por ciento de los hondureños justifica el golpe de Estado contra el presidente Manuel Zelaya, mientras

que un 28 por ciento se declara en contra de su salida forzada del poder, reveló el jueves una encuesta publicada en la prensa local.

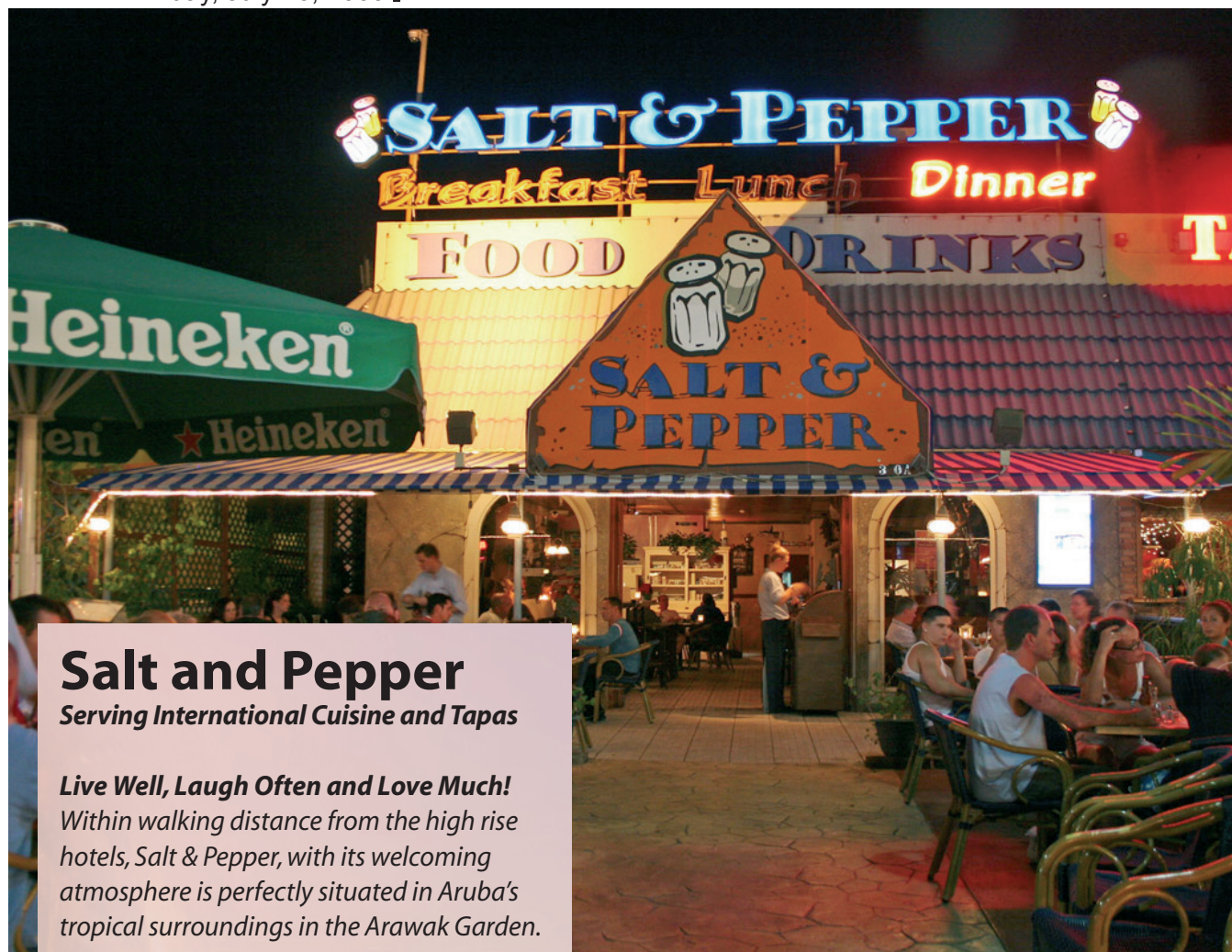
Zelaya y el Gobierno interino iniciarán en San José un diálogo con la mediación del presidente costarricense, Oscar Arias, para buscar una salida a la peor crisis política centroamericana en dos décadas.

Un 31 por ciento de los encuestados prefirió no pronunciarse sobre el tema, según el sondeo, realizado por la firma CID-Gallup del 30 de junio al 4 de julio entre 1.204 consultados con un 95 por ciento de confianza.

Además, el 56 por ciento se declaró en contra de la consulta popular planeada por el mandatario para el 28 de junio, día en que fue expulsado del país por militares, y que tenía por objetivo sondear la opinión pública para convocar a una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente y abrir camino a la reelección.

El rechazo subió al 63 por ciento cuando se le preguntó a los encuestados sobre la posibilidad de reformar la Constitución, que permitiría al depuesto líder hondureño modificar artículos como el que prohíbe un segundo mandato consecutivo. Zelaya ha recibido un contundente respaldo internacional y gobiernos tan dispares como Estados Unidos y Venezuela exigen su restitución al frente de uno de los países más pobres del continente americano.

Por su parte, el Gobierno de facto que encabeza Roberto Micheletti -apoyado por el Congreso, la Corte Suprema de Justicia, los principales gremios empresariales y la Iglesia Católica- acusa a Zelaya de traición a la patria, abuso de poder y corrupción, y se niega a restaurarlo en el poder. □



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